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Vol. III.

PAUL DE LACY, THE FRENCH BEAST CHARMER Or, New York Boys in the Jungles.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK.



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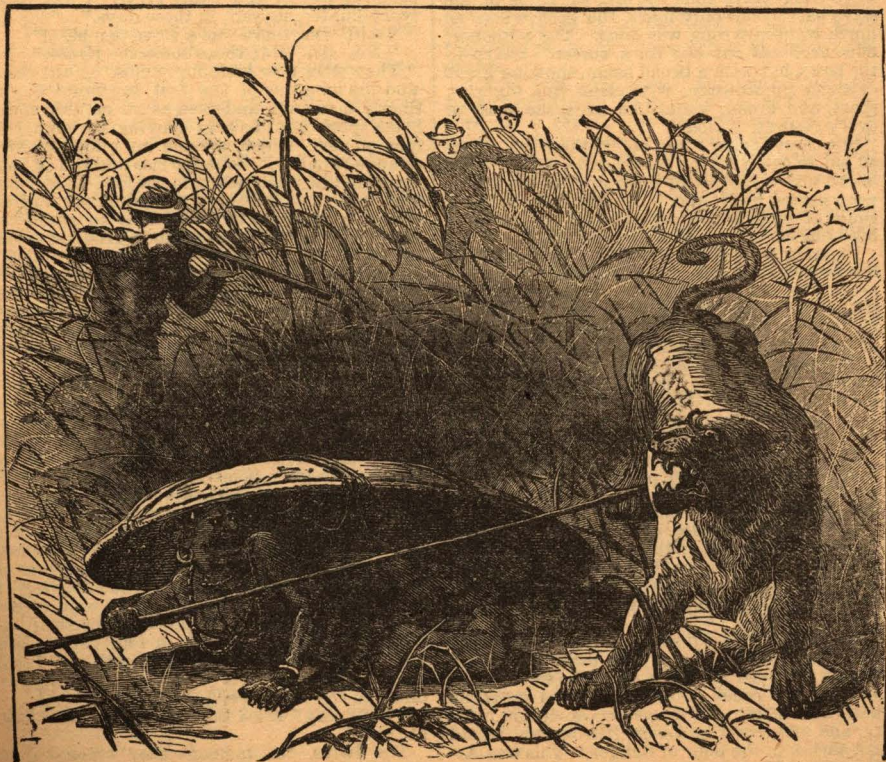
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AS PAUL GAZED AND THE LIONESS DREW TO ONE SIDE FOR A MOMENT, ONE EDGE OF THE SHIELD WAS SUDDENLY LIFTED, AND A JAVELIN WAS THRUST THROUGH THE SIDE OF THE LIONESS.

Paul De Lacy,

The French Beast Charmer;

OR,

New York Boys in the Jungles.

A Story of Adventure, Peril and Sport in Africa.

BY C. D. CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "CRUISE OF THE FLYAWAY," "THE FLYAWAY AFLOAT," "RED RIVER ROVERS," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE HUNTERS SIGHT LAND—THE TWIN PILOTS—THE START.

A BEAUTIFUL schooner, with every sail set, was running down through a tranquil sea upon the Atlantic coast of Africa. Had the time been some years earlier, any cruiser upon that coast would have picked her out as a slaver, and chased her upon sight. But the days of the slave traffic have gone by, and the ruins of the slave barracks only mark the spot where so much wanton wrong was done. The schooner, however, was cut out for a slaver. Sharp in the bows, but with a broad beam, showing great capacity for stowage; with clean run, tapering spars, and broad, yacht-like sails, she was, in every respect, a model.

She came racing down before the wind, winged out to catch all the fresh breeze. The water hissed under her broad cutwater as the waves were parted by it, and it is not strange that a smile of satisfaction rested upon the faces of both officers and crew as she sped on.

Floating from the gaff was the banner which has been carried into every sea which rolls beneath the sky—the banner of the stars and stripes. We are proud of it, and we have a right to be, for where it floats it is the symbol of freedom to the people of all lands.

The crew of the schooner were twenty in number, sailors every man, if the face is any index of character. With the crew, proper, our story has little to do, and we pass them by to turn to a group assembled on the quarter-deck.

They were five in number; the first, a strong, hardy-looking man in a pea-jacket and tarpaulin, whose grizzled locks and tanned face proclaimed him a son of the sea. This was Captain Richard Prentice, of the schooner Petrel. There was a look of intelligence, combined with rare determination, in his face, which would impress any man with the consciousness that he was one to be depended on in a moment of peril.

On his right stood a gentleman perhaps thirty years of age, wearing a full dark beard, and having the general air of a man who was equally at home in scenes of adventure and upon the ball-room floor. His figure was erect and manly, and altogether he looked like one who would not shrink in the hour of danger. This was Arthur Castleton.

On the left of the captain stood a man of

small stature, with a pair of restless black eyes, which seemed to pierce to the very marrow of the person at whom he looked. There was a restless, uneasy motion of the whole body which gave the impression that he was a very nervous person, and yet no man could be more cool in trouble or peril than Paul De Lacy, the French "King of Beasts," for such was his title in his own land.

The other two were young men—boys, you might say, not yet twenty years of age. There was a general resemblance between them and Arthur Castleton which proclaimed them relatives, and they were in fact his brothers, James and Erne, who had been allowed to join him in quest of adventure in the wilds of Africa.

"We are nearing the coast, captain," said Arthur. "Isn't it nearly time we had a pilot?"

"They will show up as soon as they sight us," replied the captain. "I know a river where we can run in and lie as safely as in the Thames or in the East river. I've been here before, Mr. Castleton."

"Good place for a slaver to lie, eh?" suggested Arthur, with a smile.

"I never was a slaver, Mr. Castleton, but I won't deny that many a cargo of ebony has been run out of this same river. I was in an ivory-hunter, myself, in those days."

"Ah! But there was a slave-pen here?"

"Yes, sir. Ha; there come the Kroos."

They were now running in close on the coast, and the long line of the first bar could be distinctly made out, and even as the captain spoke black spots could be seen moving through this line of surf, which seemed to glide on with strange rapidity. Soon the rise and fall of paddles could be discerned, and the long Kroo boats shot into view, five or six in number, and all straining every nerve to be first to reach the ship. The men of the schooner, grouped about the bows, cheered them lustily as they came on, and it was plain that the race was between two boats which had the advance, one containing four paddlers and the other two. But, the two were in advance by perhaps half a boat's-length, and their magnificent efforts were worthy of a gondola race on the Adriatic.

Never, in the course of a long life at sea, had Captain Prentice seen two nobler specimens of manhood than those before him. In looking at them it was impossible to make out any difference whatever, so perfect was the resemblance between them. Scarcely ever had nature framed two men so perfectly. Every limb was exact in its proportions, every muscle had its perfect place. They were not black, but of a rich brown, and their noses were not flattened, as in the case of most Africans. Each stroke of their broad paddles sent their boat fairly out of the water, and, inch by inch, they were creeping away from the other canoe, when their immediate opponents played a foul game. The bow of their boat suddenly turned and came crashing into the side of the other, cutting it down to the water's edge.

"Foul play!" cried Captain Dick. "Hal! look at that!"

The twins, the moment they realized that their boat was destroyed, bounded like cats into the boat of their enemy, before they could back

away after their cowardly act. One landed in the bow and the other in the waist, and, to the surprise and delight of the Petrel's crew, each lifted a man by the shoulder and waist and hurled him far out into the waves. Before their startled enemies had time to think they were floundering in the water and their boat was flying on toward the schooner, still in advance of the other boats, although some of them were crowding hard upon them. But their gallant act had in fact settled the matter in the mind of the captain of the Petrel, and if they had even come in last they would have been the pilots chosen. That, however, was decided by their dashing up a full boat's length ahead of the others, amid the delighted shouts of the Petrel's men.

"Me pilot, cappen!" called out one of them, eagerly. "Take ship in."

"He knows English a little," said Arthur, in surprise.

"We've traded on this coast a good deal, and they have picked it up. Do you know the reefs, Kroo?"

"Plenty me know, cappen," replied the man, with a laugh. "Take you plenty safe; good ribber here."

"I know that, old fellow; been here before in my time."

"You man-stealer?" demanded the pilot, casting a dark look upon the commander.

"No, no; ivory was what I was after. Now take this schooner in."

The other boats, seeing that the gigantic twins had gained the day, pulled out of the schooner's course and kept her company, grinning at the sailors, and holding up their broad hands for presents. The man who had acted as spokesman for the twins sprang into the fore chains; and, suffice it to say, in half an hour the schooner had run safely through two lines of breakers, crossed the bar at the mouth of the stream, and, attended by nearly fifty boats of various sizes, was sailing up a noble river toward the old landing where the slavers used to lie. Two hours later they rounded a point and came to anchor in a sort of basin before an old landing-place, back of which lay the ruins of the old slave-pens.

"My work done, cappen," said the pilot, after the anchor had gone down rattling to the bottom. "You pay; me go."

"Hold on!" answered the skipper. "I don't think we have done with you yet. Have you got any lion-hunters in your village?"

The man started, and parting the painted calico which covered his broad breast, showed a perfect network of scars, crossed and recrossed, as if cut there by powerful claws. Then he showed his left arm, which bore the marks of teeth.

"Tao do that," he said, quietly. "I am Mudara, the lion man; I am the king of all hunters, I and my brother. Would cappen hunt the lion?"

"Yes; will you be my man?"

"I will, but my brother must come with me, for we cannot part."

The captain nodded, and turned to Arthur.

"I think you had better have this man. Never mind his boasting; there must be some

pluck in a man who could take such wounds as those and bear up. I think he is all right."

"I'll take him. You had better arrange about payment, because you have traded with these fellows before, and understand it. We shall want a good party with him, but he can be the leader."

The arrangements were quickly made. Mudara and Danatoo were to select fifty hunters, men who were not afraid to join in the chase of the king of beasts. They were to have so much in payment, and to be armed and fed by the owner of the Petrel. The cargo which had been brought, condemned army muskets, cheap calicoes, and colored beads, were just the things to take the fancy of the natives, and two hours after the schooner came to anchor the twin brothers came marching down by the ruins of the old barracoon at the head of a band of men who certainly looked ferocious enough for anything. There is nothing upon the face of the earth so fierce as the native African warrior. Their woolly locks were "done up" in a style which would have put to the blush the efforts of any modern *artiste*. Upon some heads it rose into a conical cap; upon another stuck out straight from the back of the head, and in others still, rose in double horns high into the air. All carried broad shields and spears, and not a few muskets in addition, obtained in barter with the ships which at times appeared upon these shores.

"Now look you, men!" announced Arthur.

"I and my friend have come to Africa to secure *alive* certain savage animals and carry them back to our own land. And we shall never return until we carry with us a family of lions. We have every means in our possession to do the work, and must succeed."

"And we look to see our men obey us," added Paul. "If they do, very good; we shall be kind masters; if not—*prenez garde!*"

And he touched his rifle in a most significant manner.

Two days later, leaving the schooner at anchor guarded by ten seamen under the care of the first mate, and carrying with them seven cage wagons drawn by ox teams, the party of adventurers, with the rest of the crew, armed to the teeth, turned their faces toward the lions' home.

CHAPTER II.

LONG RANGE SHOOTING—CHASED BY A RHINOCEROS—THE BATTLE OF THE GIANTS.

At the Krooman village they had provided themselves with a large number of oxen, for if they succeeded these would be necessary in order to drag back the wagons containing the animals which they had taken. It was an imposing procession which started out from the coast, and many of those left behind doubted if they would ever return. But the hearts of the adventurous party were full of hope, and they seemed to see success before them as they marched away. Each carried his favorite weapon, a rifle of the most improved make, somewhat larger than would have been used in our own country. In addition to a heavy Sharp's, the captain carried, or rather had in the wagon, a heavy Dutch "roer," or elephant gun.

"I don't know what the Cap wants to carry that cannon for," said James Castleton, laughing. "Errie says the first time he fired it off in Madeira, all the garrison turned out under arms because they thought an enemy's fleet was attacking the city."

"Oh, let up!" growled the captain, in seeming anger. "You'll see, before you get out of Africa, that a big gun is a mighty good thing. I'd like to have an elephant or a rhinoceros come roaring and charging down on that pop-gun of yours; how much do you suppose it would do to stop him?"

At this moment Mudara sent back two men to say that eland were in sight. The boys, snatching up their rifles, started out eagerly, the captain and Arthur not far behind them. The blacks had halted on the crest of a little rolling ground, from which the river and the plain below could be plainly seen. Upon the grass, in a bend of the river, five elands were feeding, those gigantic deer, unlike anything else upon the face of the earth.

"You can't get near them," declared Arthur, as he saw the nature of the country, which was perfectly open; "and perhaps there will never be a better chance to show these black fellows what kind of men we are. What should you say the distance was, captain?"

"Nine hundred yards, easy."

"Very well; tell Mudara that I am going to kill one of those elands from here."

The Krooman looked at the speaker with a sort of derision. He had heard much of the boasting of the white man, but this was a little more than he expected, even from his employer. But Arthur, with a smile upon his face, took up his long-range rifle, a weapon which he had had built especially for such business as this. It had the wind-gage and patent sights, and he had done some close shooting with it, even at a thousand yards. Throwing himself upon his back, and setting up the sight and gage, he watched them for a moment while he calculated the windage, which was very slight, and then, crossing his feet to form a rest, he threw himself into his pet position for long-range shooting, and flashed his sharp eye through the sight. A short laugh broke from the lips of Mudara.

"Why do you laugh?" asked Arthur, looking up.

"Because the white man thinks a Kroo is a fool. The lightning could not kill so far away as that, great master!"

"You do not know the white man yet," was the quiet answer. "Watch me, and you will see why we are your masters."

Again he looked down the sights. Now he knew that he must not miss. If he did it would forever destroy the confidence of the suspicious negro in his word. If he had been shooting for his life he could not have taken more pains, nor could he have asked for a better target. At last came the crack of the rifle.

"Habet!" said Arthur, letting the stock of his rifle fall, and rising on his elbow, he looked across the open ground. "Now what do you say, Mudara?"

A huge bull eland, which had been quietly feeding nearest to them, was seen to start suddenly, throw his head into the air, and then

come pitching down upon his head, dead before he touched the ground. Mudara and his men gazed a moment, and then bent the knee to the young man.

"Mudara was a great hunter," said the man, humbly. "He is a child now—the son of the great white chief. Let him learn at his feet."

"I will protect you," answered Arthur, quietly. "Fear nothing while you are under my care."

"A good lesson," declared the captain. "Tell the men to track on."

The creaking of the wagons was again heard, and the teams came on at their long, steady pace, while the hunters went down the slope in advance to secure the body of the dead eland. James was now running on far in the front on a kind of devil-may-care race for adventure, when, with a snort which is like no earthly sound, a huge black rhinoceros sprung suddenly out of a thicket of *wait-a-bit* thorns and dashed after him.

Jim did not linger on the order of his going. There was something so preternaturally ugly in the twinkling little eyes of the vicious brute that the boy's only idea was to put as much space as possible between him and the rhinoceros. He ran like a man, but, looking over his shoulder, he saw that the long horn was a little nearer to his coat-tail than it was when he started, which was far from assuring. That awkward, rolling, deceitful gait was evidently carrying the creature over the ground faster than it looked. A tree would have pleased Jim, but there was no tree near at hand. More than this, the beast had succeeded in running him off from his friends, and every step lessened his chances of succor. Yet he was no longer losing ground, but at the same time he could not keep up the pace at which he was going much longer. Just as this thought passed through his mind he pitched head foremost into a singular hole in the ground, fully ten feet in depth, while the rhinoceros blundered over him at a breakneck gait, a few moments after.

Jim was wise enough to lie still. He did not know what good fortune had rut this sink-hole in his way, but of one thing he was certain: the rhinoceros did not know where he had gone. He heard an angry snorting and puffing on the brink of the pit, and a moment later the same noise on the other side.

What could it mean?

Perhaps another rhinoceros, unwilling that the first should have all the fun, had joined in the chase. Jim was not at all unnerved by this his first hunter's peril; and all at once it occurred to him that he had taken his rifle down into the hole with him. Why not try a shot at the big quadruped or his mate? Securing his rifle, he looked to see that it was all right, when the earth shook beneath the weight of heavy bodies, and there was a violent crash above.

"Durn my buttons!" muttered Jim. "If there ain't a fight right in the family, I'll see about this."

Raising his head slowly from the pit into which he had fallen, he saw a sight which filled him at once with wonder and delight. His gigantic enemy had aroused, near the brink of the pit, a fellow of his own breed, somewhat larger

than he was, but of the *white* species. Generally speaking, the white rhinoceros, or muchacha, is a comparatively pleasant fellow, especially so when compared with the kaobaba or black. But the black fellow had seen fit to blunder over him when he was enjoying his noonday *siesta* upon the grass, and that was more than any well-intentioned rhinoceros, even though a peaceable denizen, could very well endure; and the consequence was a row of the very largest magnitude.

The two huge creatures had butted their heads together, and now, propped up on their short, sturdy legs, were doing their best to overthrow one another. Each seemed to know that a fall was death, and that the long horn would be plugged into his vitals below his protecting coat of mail if he once went down.

"Go it, blacky; pitch in, whity!" roared Jim, reckless in his excitement. "Fight hedgehog; fight skunk—it don't make any difference which whips. Look out, blacky; he made you stagger that time, and if you ever get that horn in your bread-basket—good-by, John! That's it; keep it up! I wonder if the boys know where I am?"

Still the battle between the two huge animals continued, and Jim, beginning to come to his prudence, crawled out of the hole, holding onto his rifle, and prepared to decamp. But, to his utter surprise and horror, no sooner did he appear on earth than both creatures gave up their battle with one another and came dashing after him at full speed. Whirling suddenly in his tracks, Jim raised his rifle hip-high and delivered his fire, when the black, which was the one hurt, believing the muchacha to be the cause of his wound, turned suddenly upon him and buried the long horn in his side; but, shaking him off, the muchacha rushed savagely to the encounter, while Jim industriously plied his legs in the frantic endeavor to escape, and hoped that he should be able to do so, thanks to the battle between the infuriated brutes, when the snorting and puffing in his rear announced that the chase had begun again. Looking back, he saw that the black alone was pursuing him, and the great white form of the muchacha was extended on the plain, while the other, more vindictive than ever, was flying after him.

"I'm just chuck full of friends!" thought Jim, despairingly. "They just let any kind of an animal hoof it after me, and they never miss a meal on my account. I thought they'd pan out better than that, I did."

He was beginning to get tired, but, under the circumstances, thought it best not to rest just then, for the earth was shaking under the tread of the enraged kaobaba, and he wanted a safe resting-place. Suddenly there appeared before his eyes a forest grove, and with a cry of joy he plunged into the verdant cover, and at once shinned up a good stout tree, with the black fellow thundering on at his heels. For a moment he lost sight of his enemy, so quickly and earnestly did Jim lay himself down to the work of climbing, and he had lost track of the young fellow for a moment upon first entering the woods. Jim sat quiet, hoping that he could not be seen, while the kaobaba was roaming about with his head close to the ground. But, all at

once, the small twinkling eye was raised and caught sight of the boy among the branches.

He gave one leap into the air, with a loud snort, and lowering his head, dashed at the tree with a shock that nearly shook Jim from his perch and made the tree sway like a mast in a gale of wind. Then, cocking his head on one side, he backed up and again dashed at the tree.

CHAPTER III.

SHOT IN THE EYE—THE FIRST LION.

So sudden had been the rush of the kaobaba and the flight of Jim that the others had hardly time to realize that he was in danger when pursuer and pursued were out of sight behind the thorn grove. Then Mudara raised the yell of his race, and the whole band dashed away in pursuit. But so rapid was the flight of the boy and the chase of the rhinoceros that they could not overtake him. Not seeing the boy, they had halted while the battle between the huge beasts was at its height, and when Jim broke away in rapid flight, and the two antagonists followed, they spread out on both sides and again took up the chase.

And when the black, after disposing of his enemy, had banged against the tree once, Mudara and his brother dashed into the thicket, their spears ready for action, and the first notice the black had of his new enemies was a javelin planted in his flank. Whirling quickly, he dashed at Danatoo with his horn ready for service; but, in doing this, he exposed himself to attack from Mudara, and a second javelin, more deeply planted than the first, pierced him in the throat.

The brave beast saw that he was in danger, but with the tenacity of his breed he did not flinch. He made a rush at Mudara, whistling shrilly. Jim slipped quietly down from the tree and seized his rifle. Now that he had backers, the boy was ready for sport or fight. His weapon was a good one, and he felt tolerably sure of his aim, but he knew that the coat of the black was proof against any ordinary bullet. A shot in the eye would be fatal if he could make it, but, aside from that, he did not believe his rifle could be effective. Grasping the weapon firmly, he threw himself in the way of the vicious brute, and aiming for the eye, pulled. Then, turning quickly, he ran for his life.

Scarcely had he taken a dozen steps when a wild yell from the lips of Mudara called him, and looking back, he saw the negro lion-hunter dancing wildly on the prostrate form of the kaobaba, and assailing him loudly with insulting epithets. Jim ran back, and found to his delight that his bullet had passed through the glaring eye of the rhinoceros directly into his brain, and the great beast was dead.

"The white man's thunder is sure!" and Mudara bowed low. "Their boys are stronger than the men of Kuruman. Let us go."

They returned on the trail, and were soon joined by Arthur and the rest, who were delighted to find that Jim was unharmed.

"But look here," protested the boy. "I'm not so selfish that I want all the fun to myself. The next time you see a rhinoceros put out after

me I give you permission to pile in and help all you can."

"You ran too fast," averred the captain.

"We couldn't see your back for the dust."

"I didn't run any too fast, I can tell you. That old horn was just playing tag with the skirt of my jacket all the time. I only wished I had wings about that time."

It was too early in the trip to think of preserving the bodies of the slain rhinoceroses; yet Paul lingered over them with longing eyes and wished to test his powers in preserving them. But after awhile they were left, and the hunters kept on to the spot where the eland had fallen, thinking to secure steaks enough for their noonday meal. To their disgust the body of the huge deer was gone! They could see a broad mark upon the grass as if the animal had been dragged along for some distance, and Arthur commenced to follow it up, his rifle thrown carelessly into the hollow of his arm, when a wild cry from Mudara called him back.

"*Tao!*" he announced, briefly.

"A lion?"

"Three!"

"How do you know that?"

The black pointed to the grass, and even the eyes of the young American could make out the tracks of animals of the feline race upon it. But he was not yet sufficiently master of his craft to make out the number.

"I don't know how many lions there may be," returned Arthur, quietly; "but this I will say: I don't propose to allow them to rob me of my game in that way. Come, Paul."

The Frenchman took up his rifle, and the two darted away together on the broad trail, and Mudara and his brother followed, calling to eight or ten of their men to join them. They kept a little in the rear of the two hunters, when Arthur turned and called to Mudara to send back for spare rifles. Two of the men ran back, and quickly returned with the guns.

"You take one and follow Paul, Mudara; Danatoo can follow me, and when I call for a gun, see that it is ready to my hand," ordered Arthur.

The man nodded, and they walked on quickly, following the track by which the eland had been dragged. For nearly half a mile they trod on cautiously, when a hand was suddenly laid upon Arthur's shoulder.

"There, there, there!" said Danatoo, in a soft voice. "Do you not see the lion? Do you not know that *Tao* is there?"

Arthur paused and looking ahead, saw the body of the eland extended on the grass, and surrounding it a dark, tawny mass, seemingly without motion of any kind. But both Danatoo and his brother knew that the lions were there.

Arthur let his rifle drop to the earth, while he studied the giant prey. They were lying quite still, sucking the blood of the eland and tearing out pieces of his flesh from time to time. Only one of them, evidently the father of the family, raised his head and looked at the men who had been so daring as to intrude upon them in the moment when they were engaged in their repast. There was a majestic look in the front of this noble beast which took Arthur by surprise,

and for the moment held him speechless. But he was an old hunter, and with a powerful effort of the will threw off the fascination of that steady, malignant glare.

"Go to the right, Paul! There you can get a sight on the lioness. This big fellow is mine, for he has such a saucy look that I accept his challenge." And Arthur evidently "meant business."

Paul ran out to the right, attended by Mudara, and as he did so, called the attention of the other lions, and for the first time the three rose. Two were large males, and the third a lioness of great size, and Arthur could at that moment only wonder that he could have taken interest in the dwarfed and stunted creatures he had seen in menageries.

"Get ready, Paul!" he cried; "they are waking up."

As he spoke, the large male which had first looked up began to trot toward him, evidently with the intention of investigating the matter fully, while the lioness ran off in another direction, but with her eye bent upon Paul and Mudara. Arthur was no longer attending to them, for it was plain that the fellow in front intended to claim all his attention. He was coming up at a half-trot, and Arthur brought his rifle to his shoulder, and, taking steady aim, sent a ball into the shoulder of his huge antagonist. But a sort of side leap which the creature made at this moment partly disconcerted his aim, and the shot was not mortal, nor, indeed, did it stop the lion in the least. For, changing from the trot to the leap, he came on in great bounds, making the hills tremble with his sonorous roar.

Arthur merely put his hand behind him for his reserve rifle; it was thrust into his hand by the faithful Kroo, who had not flinched in the least.

Never had Arthur Castleton met such game as this, but he had been trained to shoot against as dangerous a creature, the Rocky Mountain grizzly, and he had no thought of falling now. Dropping on one knee, as he caught the heavy gun from the hand of Danatoo, he waited calmly for the last leap, while Danatoo, with his heavy spear, also calmly waited. As the lion settled down before his last leap, the negro cried:

"Fire—fire, then!"

"Steady!" answered Arthur, never turning his eyes from those of the lion; "I prefer to take my game upon the wing."

The body of the lion rose into the air, and the two boys, who were running up, rifles in hand, thought that their brave brother had seen his last of earth. But never, even in the days of his first shooting, had Arthur Castleton taken such steady aim as now, when the huge body hung suspended over his very head.

Danatoo sprang impulsively forward, when the rifle cracked, and, swift as the hawk in its descent, the lion came down almost upon Arthur's head. He sprang nimbly aside and whipped out a heavy navy revolver, while the spear of Danatoo was buried in the lion's back. But there was no need of the blow, for the bullet had passed through the heart, and the giant of the plains lay dead. Before they had time to rejoice the crack of a rifle and a cry from Paul

called them, and with shouts of dismay they sprang to his aid, for he was in fearful danger!

CHAPTER IV.

MUDARA'S SHIELD—THE FIRST CAMP.

PAUL DE LACY was an old hunter, and one who never went back in the face of any of the brute creation.

When he ran out to the right, followed by Mudara, he had made up his mind to give a good account of the two lions which had taken that direction, but when he had gone a few hundred yards, to his surprise, neither the lion nor lioness was anywhere in sight. But in front there was good cover, long grass, and clumps of bushes, where it would be easy for the animals to lie, ready for a spring.

"Take care, master!" cried the negro. "Tao too smart; he lay low and watch; pretty soon he charge, maybe 'fore you know."

"All right, Mudara!" responded Paul, who had been long enough in Yankee-land to pick up some of their idioms. "I s'all proceed wiz ze utmost caution. Aha! ze lion s'all know hees mastaire."

"Hiss," whispered Mudara. "Look; by the bush there!"

Paul glanced quickly in the direction pointed out, and could make out the tawny hide of the lion through the leaves. He was lying half hidden amid the foliage, perfectly quiet, but evidently waiting for a chance to make a charge. The gleam of his savage eyes could be plainly made out through the openings in the foliage.

"Stand where you are!" hissed Paul. "Attention, *mes enfants*, and you s'all perceive how I shoot ze lion. Aha, ze old villain; he laf at me, eh?"

Dropping on one knee, the Frenchman took a long and steady aim at the crouching creature. There were few men who were better shots than Paul when he had time to make his aim certain, and the glaring eyes of the beast, turned full upon him, told him where to shoot. Mudara stood like a statue, waiting for the shot, for he had begun to have the greatest faith in the death-dealing rifles of the white men, having once seen them work. At the crack of the rifle the lion made a convulsive leap, and his body showed for a moment, high above the bush, and then settled down out of sight. Only both fore paws could be seen stretched out in front of the bush in an attitude which seemed plainly to show that he was either dead or hit so hard as to be incapable of making trouble.

"Zat is ze way I dispose of ze miserable wretches," said Paul, beginning to reload his rifle. "You perceive zat I am able to dispossess ze animal of life in a way which it is impossible for ze Yankees to imitate. I—*Sacre!*"

The sudden pause and expletive were superinduced by the rush of a tawny body, and there bounded into view, within twenty yards of the two men, the gigantic form of the lioness, who had been crawling slowly toward them through the long grass. The sudden and unlooked-for attack took the lion-tamer by surprise, and for

the moment he forgot the power which he claimed over the animals of the brute creation. His empty rifle dropped from his hand, and he reached back and groped blindly for the spare gun in the hands of Mudara. But, in drawing it toward him, the lock became caught in some way in the pocket of his hunting-coat, and it was discharged; he stood helpless before the enraged lioness! For the first time in his life the Frenchman lost nerve, and made a backward leap, which exposed Mudara to the rush of the savage beast.

Then it was that the lion king showed the stuff of which he was made. With a yell which might well have struck terror to the stoutest heart, the Kroo threw forward his broad shield which he always carried at his back. Planting his foot firmly, he set the edge of the shield upon the ground, and grasping the strongest of his javelins, boldly met the attack, while Paul De Lacy, crawling like a snake through the long grass and dragging his gun after him, reached a place of safety. As he did so he heard a rattling, hollow sound as the claws of the lioness struck the tough bull-hide of the shield. Whirling over on his back the Frenchman began to reload, and when he sprang to his feet with the rifle in his hand he saw the lioness bounding furiously upon the broad shield, which was lying flat upon the ground; Mudara was nowhere in sight!

Mudara's shield was very large, nearly seven feet in length, and hollowed like the back of a turtle. It had been a source of much merriment to Jim and Ernie Castleton, who called it a canoe, and wondered that the chief should care to lug such a ponderous affair with him. It was of tough bull-hide, crossed on the outside by sinews of the rhinoceros, and capable of bearing a great weight.

There was the shield, but where was Mudara? As Paul gazed and the lioness drew to one side for a moment, one edge of the shield was suddenly lifted, and a javelin was thrust through the side of the lioness! She turned again with an agonized roar, but as before the shield lay flat upon the ground, and all her efforts were not enough to raise it. Again and again she charged upon the hollow shield, but as often as she did so, only the rattle of the bull-hide and the laugh of the hidden warrior was the reply. By this time Paul had reloaded his rifle, and taking steady aim sent a ball into the shoulder of the lioness. Maddened by this new wound she sprang toward the Frenchman, going upon three legs, but before she had made a dozen steps Mudara was up again, and buried another javelin with wonderful precision through and through the beast's body.

It was enough. The barbed point really had pierced the heart, and with a final roar of mingled rage and pain, the brave lioness rolled over dead, just as the other hunters came rushing up.

"*Seclerats!*" cried Paul. "My friends, zis is ze very splendid hunting country. *Vaici* ze lion family, laid low in one day! *Two grande rhinoceros*, and a very *magnifique eland*. Aha! It is a glorious country, and we s'all become distinguished from our prowess."

"I thought your distinguished days were

over when the lioness charged you, old boy," said Arthur. "If it had not been for the chief here you would have been stripped into ribbons by this time. Where was that eye for which you claim such power?"

"*Mon ami*," answered Paul, laying his hand upon the shoulder of the speaker, "zere arrive to every man moments w'ich overpower ze strongest heart, and I assure you zat for ze moment I forgot zat I had an eye!"

Arthur laughed, and turning to Danatoo ordered him to see that the game was brought in, and sent Mudara, who looked none the worse for his bout with the lion, to see that a camp was made in the bend of the river where the eland had been shot. The natives, with shouts and insults, dragged the bodies of the lions over the grass, proudly asserting their superiority over them, now that they were dead. They began to rejoice in being made the companions of "great lords" who had employed them, having before entertained for them a certain contempt, as people of no experience, who must gain knowledge at their feet. But, since Jim, Arthur and Paul had already shown their ability to cope with the creatures which they hold the most in dread, they no longer held themselves to be superior and were ready to obey.

The wagons were drawn up in a sort of neck of land which inclosed the bend in the river, and into this bend the cattle were driven, for the presence of so many lions was proof that the cattle would have no safety unless strongly guarded. Paul took upon himself the task of skinning the lions, for he would not trust the natives. His work was done neatly, and the skins stretched for drying before the captain, who was cook for the party, announced supper ready. The eland had been cut up and divided, and the sailors and negroes separated and cooked their own suppers, while the officers and owners took their meal apart. Most of the negroes and sailors contented themselves with simply roasting the meat upon a forked stick, but the others were more dignified in their meal, and added a cup of hot coffee, of which they had brought a supply. Mudara was made captain of the watch for that night, and the whites crawled into the wagons, where they made their beds, and prepared for sleep.

Half an hour later pandemonium suddenly broke out around the wagons; the sleepers started up and grasped their weapons, satisfied that their camp had been suddenly assailed by some savage tribe. But, as they sprang, half-dressed, from the wagons, they saw the natives hurling firebrands into the midst of a circle of savage-looking beasts, which Paul recognized at once as hyenas. Three or four shots sent them howling away, and the whites returned to the wagons. But it was a strange night, the first they passed away from the coast, under the African sky. Grim, shadowy forms flitted by in the gloom. Strange birds, to them unknown, sailed overhead. The laugh of the hyena, the bark of the jackal, the distant lowing of the wild buffalo, and the splash of aquatic animals in the river near at hand, mingled in strange confusion. Then, dominating over all, and for the moment bushing all other sounds, came the distant roar of a lion, roaring, cat-like, in search of prey.

But, little by little, they grew accustomed to these sounds and dropped off to sleep, and none were awake of them all save Mudara and the Africans whom he had selected to guard the camp. And when morning broke they sprang up, ready to relish the breakfast which Nature might provide, for of the eland of the night before, not a scrap remained.

CHAPTER V.

FISH AND SPRINGBOK—"THE NATIVE"—A PAIR OF GORILLAS.

"Now for breakfast!" cried Arthur. "What shall it be? If you say rhinoceros-steaks, you are welcome, or, perhaps you would prefer to breakfast on stronger meat. There are the lions, then."

"Pah!" scorned Jim. "I'm hungry enough, but I don't think I am far enough gone yet to eat cat's meat. Say, Ernie, where are those hooiks? I am for fish for breakfast."

The two boys raked out their tackle and sauntered down to the river, picking out a few grubs from rotten logs as they neared the stream. The fish they caught were small but ravenous, and the bank was soon covered with the finny treasures. As Ernie sat there with his feet dangling over the water, there was a sudden tumult beneath him, and then rose out of the water a head so hideous that the boy rolled over and over in his haste to get out of the way, while Jim abandoned all idea of fishing, for the time being, and scrambled back out of reach. Jim thought a moment before he could realize to what creature that square head, twinkling eyes, and wide nostrils could possibly belong, and then he remembered the account he had heard of him.

"The hippopotamus, Ernie!" he cried. "If we had only brought our rifles."

"Time enough for that, after breakfast," returned Ernie, as he began to string his fish. "As for me, I want *grub*, and I don't care who knows it."

They had caught about a hundred beautiful little fish, something after the nature of the trout, and, when cooked, tasting nearly as good. Arthur and Paul had gone out, attended by Danatoo, to see if they could strike some game, and the boys set some of the negroes to work cleaning the fish, while they broiled them over the fire. The sailors, seeing the luck they had had, took fishing-tackle and went down to the river, and the boys and blacks had all the camp to themselves. Not long after, they heard the distant crack of rifles, and an hour later the hunters came back, the negroes bearing on their shoulders half a dozen springbok, which they had been lucky enough to strike a little way up the river. While some of this meat was being prepared the hunters sat down to enjoy the fish which the boys had caught, and which they pronounced delicious.

"We saw a hippopotamus," announced Ernie, "and after breakfast we are going down to shoot him."

"We can't stop to bother with him now," murmured Arthur. "Our purpose in coming here is as far off as ever, and we must get into a lion country as soon as we can."

"I should say this was a lion country," was Ernie's opinion.

"We've got to take a family alive. Neither Paul nor I will go back until we do that."

"I'm in no hurry," and Ernie took up another fish. "I don't want to go out of a country where we can have such fun as we have had here. It was worth something to see Jim leg it, yesterday, when that rhinoceros was after him."

"Oh, yes!" returned Jim; "it was nuts to you to see me dig in. Now, see here, Ernie, my boy—I'll have the laugh on you before you get out of Galilee; you may be sure of that."

The others laughed, for they knew Jim well enough to be sure that he would be very likely to keep his word. By the time the fish were disposed of, the springbok steaks were ready, and they did ample justice to them. After that, feeling somewhat lazy, the boys strolled down to the river once more, hoping to discover his majesty, the hippopotamus, again, but the beast, probably disgusted with so much company, did not appear, and the boys lay down under the shade of the trees, bent upon enjoying themselves. Ernie was the first to get tired of that, and, stripping off his clothing, stood upon the bank and was about to plunge head-first into the river, when he suddenly received a blow which knocked him several paces backward to where his weapons lay. Seizing a pistol in one hand and his knife in the other, he started to his feet to be confronted by a being whom he at first took for a native, a creature a little over four feet in height, with short, powerful legs, and wonderfully long, swinging arms—a real monster, if a human being it was.

"See here, old fellow!" cried Ernie, "what did you do that for, you son of a baboon?"

Gibbering like a maniac, the repulsive creature caught up a stick which lay upon the ground and advanced toward the boy menacingly, his head bent low, and his eyes glaring at the lad from under his saggy brows.

"Keep off!" warned the boy, seizing a pistol.

But the creature looked so demoniac that the boys saw he must do something quickly or suffer the consequences. The pistol cracked, and the blood spurted out from below the shoulder-blade, where the shot had entered. The creature uttered a wild yell and sprang back, beating his breast wildly, and stood for a moment hovering on the river-bank. Then, as if maddened, he turned and hurled himself bodily upon the boy. Ernie had time to fire one shot more, when he was borne down by the hairy body, and heard the long white teeth gnashing together close to his face. Daring up his left hand, he drove his knife to the hilt in the breast. A single wild howl of agony, and the disgusting enemy lay dead, just as the hunters came running up.

"What is this?" cried Arthur, in great excitement.

"Well," explained Ernie, "I didn't want to kill the fellow, but he tried to hit me with a club. These natives are simply horrible beasts, I think."

"Natives! What are you talking about?" re-

turned Arthur. "Here, Paul, look at this! Ernie says it is one of the natives."

"*C'est bon!*" answered Paul, laughing; "*Le grande natif, he! Ze gorilla, mon enfant: ze gorilla!*"

"That's right, Ernie," put in Jim, laughing. "Don't you allow the natives to pick on you. If I was as green as that, I'd sell my head and buy a dog, I would. Took a gorilla for a native! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am sorry ze grande man of ze woods is dead," said Paul. "I would give much to have taken him alive, by gar! Ver' well; I s'all proceed to divest him of hees garments."

Drawing his knife, he turned the creature over, and proceeded to flay him in the most approved style, while the rest went back to camp, leaving him to his congenial task. Scarcely had they settled themselves comfortably, when a wild yell of rage and a thundering "*Sacre!*" came to them on the burdened breeze.

"Help, comrades, help! Ze villain 'ave carried it away; 'ave it transported from my care. Oh, ze diable! Help! *Mille diables, scelerats, coquins, canaille!* Help; for ze love of ze Virgin, come to my aid!"

They thought the poor Frenchman in mortal peril, and grasping their weapons, ran down with hurried steps toward the river. The sound was receding, and as they reached the river bank, they saw Paul running like a madman along the bank, rifle in hand, while before him ran three or four tall figures, the foremost carrying across his shoulder the form of the dead gorilla. Then they understood that the family of the creature, actuated by what motive it is impossible to say, had rushed in, snatched the body of their slain friend, and hastily decamped, leaving the irate Paul to mourn its loss. But he, not satisfied to lose it in that way, had at once taken up the chase.

"We shall never have a better chance," cried Arthur. "There are young ones in the party, and remember that they must be taken alive."

They bounded away in pursuit, and soon caught up with Paul, who was following close on the tracks of the gorillas, bleeding from a wound in the head, where one of them had dealt him a savage blow. But this had only served to arouse the wrath of the Frenchman, and he would have followed on their track while he had a leg to stand on.

"Revenge, Paul!" encouraged Arthur. "There are two young ones, and they must be ours. As for the big fellows, no one could tame them, but with the young it is different."

The gorillas, seeing themselves so closely pursued, turned aside from the river, and soon after Paul came up with the stolen body, which the man-brute had at last thrown aside in order to save himself.

But, even in this moment, the two older animals took the rear guard and ran somewhat slowly, gnashing their teeth savagely at the pursuers. Before them lay a thick jungle; if they once reached it, all would be well for them. But, on the very verge of safety, there rose up from the edge of the jungle a party of Mudara's men, who had made a circuit in order to impede the flight of the gorillas.

Before the young ones could retreat, they were borne down under the shields of Kroomen, bound hand and foot, unable to move. Then the others, with furious yells of rage, hurled themselves upon the negroes, only to be borne back upon the points of the assegais, and to fall at last, pierced by a hundred wounds. The hunters had secured a long-sought prize—a young male and female gorilla—and their hearts were full of pride as they went back to camp, dragging their unwilling captives with them.

CHAPTER VI.

KING SIBATICANE'S ENVOY—AN ALLY—"THE KING IS DEAD—LONG LIVE THE KING."

THEY were delighted with their success, for one of their dreams was the capture, alive, of these supposed "links" between man and the brute creation.

The gorillas were placed in one of the cage wagons and in charge of one of the mates, three sailors, and ten of the negro escort, sent back to the schooner, the mate carrying written orders as to how the captives were to be treated. An hour later both parties were on the march, the larger section tracking on over the vast plain toward the land where they had determined to make their permanent camp before the grand hunt began. Three days later the negroes raised a shout, and Mudara pointed to a conical hill which rose in the distance.

"That is the place!" he explained. "There we make a camp, and not all the men of the country can drive us out."

"Do you think the natives will fight?"

"Until they know the power of the great lords I am proud to serve," answered Mudara. "The King Sibaticane thinks proudly of himself; he has even dared to cross spears with Mudara, but a little lesson from my great master will teach him his place."

Three hours later they reached the front of the hill, and the patient men dragged the wagons to the top. Once there Arthur could not help saying that the negro had shown great skill in his choice of a camp. It was a sort of natural fortress, assailable only upon one side, for the river swept in a great circle about the base of the hill, which rose from the water in an almost perpendicular line. Three men, well armed, could have defended this part of the hill against an army of natives. Upon the crest of the hill rose a strange parapet, with an opening large enough for the wagons to drive in, and from this the road descended in a regular slope, which, swept by the fire of rifles, would be a very warm place for an assailing force.

"Good enough!" declared the young leader of the hunters. "We could hold our own here against a greater force than is likely to come against us."

But, even as they were standing on the crest of the parapet the sound of barbaric music was heard upon the river, and a fleet of great war canoes rounded a point and came bearing down upon the hill. Some of these canoes were of great size, carrying a hundred fighting men, flourishing their spears and beating their hollow shields, accompanying the action by tremendous

yells. In the foremost canoe, under a canopy formed from the feathers of the ostrich, sat a man of gigantic frame, fully equal to Mudara as far as muscular force was concerned. By a rapid count Arthur made out the assailing force to consist of nearly six hundred men.

At a signal from the giant king the canoes drew together, and soon a light craft, carrying only four men, rounded the base of the hill and landed. One of these men carried upon a spear a white ostrich feather as a token of amity.

"Let them come," ordered Arthur. "This means peace, so far."

The strange heralds advanced at a run, quickly ascended the slope, and appeared at the entrance. Arthur, accompanied by Mudara as interpreter, met them. The man bearing the white feather came boldly forward and spoke, and his words were interpreted by Mudara.

"The mighty King Sibaticane demands of Mudara who are these white witches he has brought into our country? Sorrow always comes to our race in the day when the great canoes of the white men come to our shores. Let Mudara speak!"

"These are my friends," answered Mudara. "They only come among us to hunt the lion, the elephant and the rhinoceros. They can kill as far as they can see. Would Sibaticane know their power? Great lord, stand upon the rocks and kill yonder bird in the air."

The canoes had drawn in close to the base of the hill, and Arthur, taking a light sporting rifle, stepped upon the rocks. High above his head wheeled a great bird—so high, indeed, that it seemed an impossibility to bring it down. A tremendous roar of laughter broke from the men in the canoes as they saw him point the rifle at the bird sailing almost in the clouds. There was a moment of suspense; then the rifle cracked, and the smoke curled lazily upward. The bird was seen to give an upward spring in the air; then, closing his pinions, came down headlong into the canoe where the king sat, falling at his very feet. He caught it up hastily and was seen to examine it. A great discussion arose among the men in the canoes, and one, a tall young chief with a waving ostrich feather in his leaddress, appeared to be especially prominent in opposition to the king, who once or twice shook his hand at him fiercely. All at once the canoes were seen to divide into two bands, the larger portion remaining with the king and the others siding with the young chief.

"It is Naauna," cried Mudara. "He is wise; he knows the power of our great lords. Come to us, Naauna!" he cried in a voice of thunder. "Come to us, and we will make you king."

"Can you trust them?" questioned Arthur, as the canoes of the young chief turned toward the shore, under a shower of spears from the king's lances.

"Yes," declared Mudara. "Naauna has a large heart; he will do no wrong, and if right had been done, he would be king of his country."

The party of Naauna bounded to the land, covering themselves with their great shields, and ran hastily up the slope to the crest of the

hill. Arthur permitted them to enter, and then took the young chief by the hand.

"We are friends!" he said, simply. "I will make you great."

The young chief, a really handsome-looking fellow although black as ebony, bowed his head as Mudara interpreted the words of Castleton, and then addressed a few rapid words to his followers. They were about two hundred in number, armed only with the spears and shields of their people. They raised a shout, and clamoring up the rocks began to rain their assegais upon the advancing host of King Sibaticane, who were already raging up the slope, uttering hideous yells, and beating their barbaric instruments of war with all their force.

"Stand back!" commanded Arthur of Mudara and his men. "Let me show you how the white men fight. Take charge of your men, captain!"

"Petrels, ahoy!" cried the captain. "Stand by to repel boarders!"

The negroes fell back, and the sailors, seizing their muskets, sprung to the parapet.

"Give it to them!" shouted the captain. "Pour it into them!"

A rapid and murderous fire began, sweeping the narrow road through which the enemy must advance.

At the first volley their front began to shake, and fancying that their shields would stop these deadly missiles they threw them in front and again pushed on. But they might as well have interposed gauze screens to stop the bullets of the Petrel's men, and leaving twenty or thirty dead upon the slope, they rushed wildly down the hill. King Sibaticane, who had not taken any part in the assault, now sprung to the shore and took the advance.

"Black dogs!" he yelled, "follow me, and see how I sweep away these white witches."

Filled with courage by his presence, they rushed on again, when Arthur, Paul and the two boys sprung into the gateway, holding a revolver in each hand. Not a shot was fired until the enemy was near enough to show their glaring eyes, when, at a word from Arthur, the sailors again opened fire, and the enemy seemed to melt away before them. Only a hundred men, the pride and flower of Sibaticane's army, stood by the king as he continued his bold advance up the hill. He had flung aside his shield, and now, four assegais in one hand and a single one in the other, signed to his men to come on. Then Naauna bounded upon the parapet.

"Look, Sibaticane," he cried. "These are my friends. Alone, with no help from me or mine, they can beat you. But I do not love to see the blood of my people. Let us fight, and the one who is slain shall be king in Bale-gonga."

"It is good!" answered back the king; "and will the white wizards be my friends, if you are slain?"

"Yes."

Sibaticane waved his hand, and his men at once halted. Changes in government are so common among them that they regarded it with perfect indifference. Besides, they really loved

the young chief, and but few among them would have been sorry to see Naauna king.

"Take your shield, Sibaticane," cried the young chief as he bounded from the wall. "I come to meet you."

Furious for battle, with a roar that might have made even the lion tremble, Sibaticane bounded forward, sending a javelin whistling through the air as he came. Naauna turned it aside with his shield, and sent one back which pierced the shield of the king and was buried deep in his shoulder. Pulling the weapon from the wound the king hurled it back, but again the young chief eluded the weapon and returned one which bore away the crest of ostrich plumes which the king wore. At last, each holding a single javelin, the two shields clashed together, and each strained every nerve to bear the other back. The giant strength of Sibaticane began to prevail; Naauna was forced back, step by step, while a groan of sympathy broke from the lips of his men. Mad with delight, the king pressed forward more eagerly, when Naauna bounded suddenly aside—so suddenly indeed, that Sibaticane stumbled and nearly lost his footing. Before he could recover, the javelin in the hands of the young chief was driven deep into his side, and with a hollow groan the king fell dead at the feet of his conqueror. Naauna raised his spear, reeking with the blood of the king, and the united shout from both parties hailed him king. He came back and bent the knee before Arthur.

"Be good to me," he said. "Naauna will be your true brother while the blood is in his veins."

And from that hour not even Mudara was more faithful or true than the new king, Naauna.

CHAPTER VII.

UP THE RIVER—RIFLE PRACTICE—HOOKING A HIPPOPOTAMUS.

THEIR future was now secure as far as safety from the natives was concerned. In reality the negroes had wished the young chief to be their king, for Sibaticane had ruled them with a rod of iron, and they knew that in all justice the succession had belonged to Naauna. Besides, the sample they had had of the prowess of the white wizards had been enough for them, and they no longer desired to have any quarrel with them. The country was full of game, and no one could travel a mile over it without meeting some object new and interesting.

The rest of the day was spent in clearing away the signs of the recent fight and in fortifying the place against assault, not so much from the natives as the savage beasts which roamed the forest. Naauna and his men had returned to their village to take possession of it, and at the same time prepare for a great hunt which he promised Arthur should surpass anything he had ever seen. At early morning on the next day the boats of King Naauna could be seen descending the stream, and the hunters at once took their places, Arthur and the two twins going in the king's boat, and the others honoring those of the principal personages of the realm. Paul chose that which car-

ried the Princess Runa, the sister of the young king, who, had her skin been white, would have been a peerless beauty. She received the Frenchman with a smile which displayed teeth of dazzling whiteness, and invited him to a seat with her under the canopy of ostrich plumes. When all was ready the boats pushed off, and began the ascent of the river, one of those almost unknown streams with which Africa abounds. As the men worked the paddles they broke into rude songs, and the boys lying under the waving canopy, watched the green banks as they passed, and waited for a chance to display their skill with the rifle. The chance was not long in coming in a country where game is so abundant and the weapons of the natives are inadequate for their destruction. In going three miles they killed six springbok, a wildebeest, and several beautiful and to them unknown birds. All at once there rose under the bow of the king's canoe the square head of a giant hippopotamus, his wicked little eyes glaring at the boat. Without a moment's hesitation Ernie planted a bullet between his eyes, and he sunk with a mighty splash. Scarcely had he done so when there was an angry rush in the water below, and to their surprise the canoe was surrounded by these strange water animals. At least a dozen of all ages, from the "baby" not much larger than a good-sized pig to the giant of many tons, crowded about the canoe, snapping at it with their wide-open jaws, tearing pieces out of the gunwale and in various ways manifesting a disposition to make mincemeat of the craft which they regarded as the direct cause of the wrong done to their companion. The oarsmen dropped their paddles and grasped their javelins, the whites seized their rifles, and a battle royal began. The strange creatures received their death wounds grimly, and yet no sooner had one sunk than out of the river depths rose another horrid form with wildly gleaming eyes. In a boat of stronger build Arthur would have laughed at their assaults, but he could feel the shocks they gave it were terrific and that it could not much longer sustain them. All at once the canoe rose at the stern, and the bottom was forced inward with such force that the water began to pour in. At a signal from the king another large canoe ran up, and they quickly embarked, but not until Ernie had caught up a rope of sea grass, with a large hook attached and forced it through the lower jaw of the huge creature which had driven his head through the bottom of the boat.

"Clap on here, half a dozen of your old canoes," cried the boy. "We'll tow the old fool ashore, and see how he likes it."

The king at once understood, and shouted his orders in the voice of a stentor, and instantly the second canoe headed for the bank, and the men sprung out taking the end of the rope with them. It was nearly three inches in diameter, rudely made, but of wonderful strength. They were satisfied that not even the enormous power of the hippopotamus could break it. All the canoes headed for the bank, and soon two hundred men manned the rope.

"We don't want to kill him," said Arthur. "He must be taken alive, if possible."

Mudara explained the wishes of the white wizard, and the negroes began to tug at the rope, shouting in great glee, for they had never taken the giant game in this strange way. The creature resisted fiercely, but the boy had shown great skill in forcing the hook into his mouth, and every movement on his part was torture to him. Twice he appeared upon the surface, when, catching sight of his enemies, he plunged again, but from the position of the hook in his mouth he could not breathe and was forced to come to the surface again. Each time he did this the creature was dragged nearer and nearer to the shore, and at last he stood in the shallow, bracing his short sturdy legs, but hardly able to endure the agony of the hook in his jaws.

"Oh, come and see us," cried Ernie, as he tugged at the rope. "You are my meat, old chap; we want you."

The savage beast stamped and snorted, and tried his best to shake the torturing hook out, but the natives kept the rope taut, and inch by inch he was dragged out of the water, until he stood fairly upon the bank.

"Hold him there," cried Mudara. "I will show you a Kruman's trick."

He ran back a few steps and pulled up a dark-looking weed which broke with a crackling sound in his hand.

"Give me fire," he said to Jim. "But do not breathe the smoke when the bush burns."

Jim took out his match safe and lighted a piece of tinder, which he gave to the negro. He blew it into a flame and applied it to the bush, out of which burst a dense smoke, accompanied by a crackling sound something like discharges of torpedoes. Grasping the bush firmly, the negro ran up and waved it to and fro before the nostrils of the huge beast. He glared savagely and made a dash, but the negro bounded back a step or two, still waving the smoking bush before the eyes of the amphibian. All at once he reeled blindly and tried to sustain himself, but his knees trembled and finally gave way, and he sunk to the earth with a sort of gasping sigh, and lay motionless.

"Come and tie him," cried Mudara. "He can do no harm."

Drawing a bowie, Ernie quickly cut off four stout pieces of the cable, and calling the captain to his assistance, they bound the legs of the giant with true sailor skill. By this time he began to struggle faintly, but Mudara again thrust the smoking bush under his nose, and he became quiet. Then they formed a huge halter of the cable, which was made fast about the ponderous jaws of the monster and he was secure.

"Start half a hundred of these black fellows back after one of the cages, Arthur," said Ernie. "Don't say I never did anything for you."

At a word from Mudara half a dozen natives started back on a run, and quickly reappeared, drawing one of the largest of the wagons. The hippopotamus, still in a half senseless condition, was dragged into the cage by the united efforts of the entire force, and the door securely closed. This done, the cavalcade was once more set in motion, some taking to the canoes, some walking along the bank, and in this way they ap-

proached the village of Balegonga. As they neared it an army of natives, men, women and children, came rushing out to meet them, making the day hideous with their yells. But the hunters had by this time become accustomed to the rude ways of the natives, and proudly entered the village with their weapons at the shoulder, guarding the giant monster which had so strangely come into their hands. A man was selected from the natives who had trained hippopotami before, and from that time until the schooner sailed he watched the creature, and in time taught him that he had nothing to fear from the men who had dragged him from his native river.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOPPO.

WE pass over the proceedings in the village, the savage dances, the wild feasts, the warlike games and the various means resorted to by the young king to make their visit pleasant. But, on the third day, they prepared for a hunt unlike anything they had ever seen—the Hopo.

What is a Hopo?

It is a game trap, which is seen only in Africa, and could only be of use in a country where the game is very abundant. The hopo which was the property of King Naana was built of stout young trees, placed in the earth close together and wattled between with stout boughs. It consisted of two fences of this kind, rather low at the place of beginning and half a mile apart. From this point the fence gradually increased in height and at the same time came nearer together, until at the apex it was scarcely a hundred feet wide. Not far from this narrow opening a sort of raised platform had been built, and upon this was seated the king and queen, Princess Runa and other great personages of the tribe, together with their visitors, who had been promised a grand sight. The men of the tribe had been out for some hours, and, spread out in a great circle, were beating through the jungle, driving before them all the game which came in their way, and scaring them toward the mouth of the hopo, gradually contracting the circle, and taking especial pains to see that none of the animals broke through and escaped. There had not been a grand battue of this kind for nearly a month, and the game was abundant. So high was the platform upon which the visitors sat that they could see the whole length of the inclosure, nearly two miles in all, as well as hear the horrible din which was kept up by the beaters, who were pounding upon every conceivable instrument that could make a noise. With this came the roar of lions, the angry grunt of the rhinoceros, the hoarse, bellow of the buffalo, the sharp bark of the jackal, the fiendish yell of the hyena, and a dozen other different sounds, as made by the game animals of Africa when in fear or distress. Then, far down the hopo, they caught a glimpse of a moving mass crowding into the great corral and blocking it up from side to side, all heading for the smaller opening or throat of the hopo, through which they saw an avenue of escape. The white men, wildly excited, sprang to their feet and grasped their weapons.

"Not yet," said the king, laying his hand upon Arthur's arms. "You do not need the fire-sticks now."

"But they will escape! Why did you not close up the opening to the hopo, and you would have had them fast?"

The king smiled.

"Let my white brother be seated and he will see that even the black men have some wisdom."

Arthur sat down but with his eyes fixed upon the struggling creatures as they neared the apex of the hopo. They were, as we have said, representatives of nearly every animal known to this coast of Africa. In the van bounded a large herd of Cape buffalo, huge beasts with the wide-spreading horns which distinguish them so completely from others of the bovine race. Behind them lumbered a black rhinoceros, in close companionship with a huge lion, evidently frightened half out of his senses. Behind them still came a motley mass, the towering giraffe, the hartbeests, the brindled gnu, the tsessebes, and last, but not least, the zebra in all his glory. This great mass of animal life was followed by nearly a thousand natives, howling, pounding upon their broad shields, and driving their javelins into the flanks of the animals in the rear to urge them on. Those in front had already seen the opening of the hopo, and the daylight beyond, and hoped that once through it they could scatter over the surrounding country and bid defiance to their enemies.

"I don't see through your game, Mudara," said Jim. "Why don't we open fire? I can take that buffalo bull from where I sit just as easy as falling off a log."

"Watch, and you see," answered Mudara.

"If any escape you may shoot them, but don't fire now to turn them back. Here they come!"

As he spoke the buffaloes in the advance bounded between the two extremities of the hopo. Their feet landed upon what seemed a bed of green grass, but scarcely had they done so when there came a hoarse bellow of surprise and fear, and the foremost of the herd crashed through the artfully-covered pitfall which lay in the very throat of the hopo. Even if they would have turned back now they could not, for the crowd of frightened animals behind, who could not see the danger, pushed them forward. The single lion made a bound which carried him nearly across the pit, but he fell short and dropped into the hole, only to be crushed down under the huge body of the rhinoceros, which followed so closely behind him. And now the circle of black fiends, for they seem nothing else, close in upon the doomed herd. The javelins fly through the air in clouds; the long spears drink the heart's blood of the beautiful game. It is a scene of horror, of slaughter, beyond anything of which the white hunters have ever dreamed. The pit is twenty feet in depth, fifty feet wide, and over one hundred feet in length; a perfect chasm, a gulf which took in even these gigantic beasts by scores. They went tumbling into the horrible grave in horrible confusion, and the Bedlam of strange cries which arose was something appalling.

"This is murder in the first degree," cried

Arthur, unable, however, to turn away his head.

"We have many mouths to fill," observed the chief, quietly, "and we have not the fire-sticks of the white man. We must do the best we can."

"I don't know as I can blame you," averred the young man, as the beautiful animals continued to plunge into the pit, "but it looks like a useless, wasteful slaughter. Ha, look at that springbok!"

One of these light-footed creatures was seen to spring over the bodies of those already in the pit, and, bounding like a ball, leap over the edge and disappear. By this they knew that the hole was nearly full, and that their time had come. Grasping their weapons they sprang to the front of the platform and waited.

"I speak for yonder eland," said Arthur, as one of those splendid animals sprang half out of the pit.

"I take the gnu!" called out Jim.

"I will strike a zebra," announced Ernie.

"And I shall select from ze assembled multitude ze stately giraffe," was Paul's exclamation. "Here zey come!"

By this time the pit was full to the brim, and the men were spearing such of the struggling animals as attempted to escape. But the pit would hold no more, and animal after animal was seen bounding over the struggling mass and making a rush for liberty. It was at this moment that, each selecting the beast at which he would shoot, the white men opened fire. Arthur, standing erect and using one of his light rifles, drove a ball directly through the heart of the eland, which dropped in his tracks with a single hoarse bellow. Jim put one bullet into the fore shoulder of the great gnu, which staggered the creature and brought it to a walk, and while it turned its noble head to see from whence the ball had come, a second bullet between the eyes finished the work so well begun. Ernie, who was a splendid shot, brought down a beautiful zebra, more for his skin than anything else, and Paul missed his giraffe with both barrels, simply for the reason that he fired at the swaying head. Before the large herd was able to get out of reach the hunters had fired three times and Paul redeemed his lost glory by bringing down a huge kordoo and a wildbeeste. Then they approached the pit and watched the natives as they dragged out the bodies of the slain.

"Don't spear that zebra!" shouted Ernie, as the fleet-limbed steed of Africa was drawn from the pit. "By George; if I had him alive I'd ride him! Ha; give me a strap here, Cap. He's alive, as sure as fate!"

The zebra, which had simply been smothered beneath the mass of bodies, now began to breathe, and taking a broad band of eland skin from the hand of a native, the boy tied the fore-leg of the creature after the manner of the horse-tamers of his own land. Then, using a stout piece of line, he made a strong but somewhat clumsy bridle, which he fastened securely upon the head of the zebra. And, as the animal staggered to his feet, utterly bewildered, the agile boy sprang upon his back, grasping the bridle firmly with one hand and his knife with the other.

CHAPTER IX.

TAMING A ZEBRA—THE GIANTS' BATTLE—A LIVELY CORPSE.

MOST men who have engaged much in athletic sports have specialties, and Ernie Castleton was one of the best boy horsemen who ever crossed a steed. He had practiced in a section where men must learn to ride well, upon the plains of the far West, and when there he would not hesitate to mount the worst of Mexican plugs, those redoubtable "buckers," who will shake even the practiced ranchero in his seat. It was not the first time, then, that he had backed a wild horse, and the zebra, snorting in terror and wild with rage, did not frighten him. But at the same time he would have given much just at that moment for a good saddle and stirrups, or at least a pair of spurs. The zebra bounded high into the air and came down with a bump, while the natives scattered from before him with singular rapidity, for they fear the zebra almost as much as the lion.

"Let him leap off and run," cried Mudara. "Is the boy mad?"

But the boy did not look in the least frightened. He sat the animal with easy grace, his eyes flashing brightly, his knees pressed against the ribs of the little horse, and his hand holding firmly the improvised bridle. Three times the zebra tried to rear, and as often as he did so the point of the bowie, pressed against his neck, warned him that he must not play that game. All at once he sprang away in vicious bounds, going upon three legs, but the boy only laughed and urged him on. The zebra stopped as suddenly as he had started, for he found that three legs were scarcely enough for his mode of traveling. He appeared to be in deep thought, and all at once dropped as if shot and rolled over on his back! But Ernie was on his feet, grasping the end of the bridle firmly, and fairly bringing the zebra upon his knees every time he attempted to pull away. Furious with rage, he rushed headlong at the lad, but Ernie held his ground and threw the wild steed with a rapidity which took the animal completely by surprise.

"You'd better give it up, you barber's imp," cried Ernie. "I never saw the brute yet I couldn't bring on his knees. Ah! would you? Come down!"

And the zebra, which had leaped to his feet again, was thrown with considerable force, and this time he lay quiet, evidently completely cowed.

"Get up, here!" ordered the boy, striking him on the side. "Now, look out, I'm going to mount you again; so take care what you do."

He rode the animal about the plain, still going upon three legs, and brought him back.

"That's enough for one day," he said. "Tomorrow I will train him with a bit, and I'll show you one of the neatest riding animals in the world before I get done with him."

The boy was as good as his word, and having spent the rest of the day in making a bit and bridle, he was ready for the tussle next day. It was a hard fight, but in the end he was more than conqueror. And from that time until the schooner sailed Ernie rode his zebra and would not have changed him for the best American horse in the world. But woe to any other man

who dared to lay a finger upon the beautiful steed.

Two days were spent in taking care of the great game which had fallen in the hopo; then the party, accompanied by five hundred men under the leadership of Naana, marched out into the great central jungle in search of new adventures. Only two of the wagons accompanied them, and these were quickly left behind as they saw how useless it would be to wear out the cattle by forced marches.

On the evening of the third day they halted beside a beautiful little lake and made a camp, for here they were assured they would find game of every description. When the camp was made safe the party stole out to the bank of the lake and looked about them. Upon the clay beach they saw the spoor of numberless animals, and knew that this must be the very paradise of hunters. The lake lay in a sort of basin inclosed by high, rolling banks, through which a hollowed road appeared, leading down to the water's edge. This road had been used repeatedly, and was beaten as hard as stone by the feet of ponderous animals. So hard, indeed, was this highway that the spoor could no longer be observed upon it any more than upon so much rock.

The hunters took their stations upon both sides of these openings, and lay quiet, after the darkness had come. Then the moon stole up, and pattering feet could be heard along the hard path. Peeping out, they could see herds of antelopes of various kinds and hosts of the smaller game of Africa going down to the water to drink. Then the earth shook under the tread of a herd of buffalo, advancing at a gallop, and scattering the timid deer as they dashed into the water. Then came a party of gnus, their long horns laid back upon their shoulders, keeping their rank like cavalry horses in a charge. They passed by, and up trotted a pair of huge rhinoceroses of the black species, their wicked little eyes twinkling as they dashed along at their peculiar, low, deceitful gait. These two halted just in front of the concealed riflemen and suddenly dove out of sight among the bushes. Their reason for doing this was not apparent to the hunters, for they knew that nothing earthly could daunt the black rhinoceros. Then, looming black against the sky, came the ponderous forms of three huge elephants, their great ears flapping, and evidently bent upon enjoying themselves in the waters of the tank below.

As these huge creatures arrived opposite the place where the rhinoceroses lay concealed there was a sudden rush, and the vicious brutes who had concealed themselves with the sole purpose of attacking the elephants, came trotting out upon them. The male, with an angry grunt, rushed under the body of the largest of the elephants and drove his long horn upward into his vitals. A terrible roar burst from the throat of the behemoth, and he tried his best to reach his spunky assailant, but the horn was now in his breast, and, reeling, he fell upon the rhinoceros, crushing him to the earth.

In the mean time his companion had attacked the second elephant with hearty good will, dashing in with the bellicose ardor which is so

characteristic of his race. But this elephant, more agile or lucky than his companion, succeeded in presenting his head to the enemy and in giving him a vigorous thrust from his long tusks, while the third elephant, trumpeting loudly, advanced to assail their enemy on the flank. The rhinoceros, seeing himself outflanked, ran back suddenly without turning his head, and darted under the legs of the second elephant, striking them from under him with a quickness which took the great animal completely by surprise, and he came rolling to the earth, only to receive the long horn in his vitals the next moment. But while the pugnacious assailant tugged to extricate his horn, the third elephant, one of the largest of his race, suddenly plunged both tusks into the back of the kaobaba, literally pinning him to the earth. Scarcely had he done so when two rifles cracked together, and the brave beast, mortally wounded, fell forward upon the body of the slain rhinoceros, crushing him down upon the body of the second elephant.

The crack of the rifles was the signal, and instantly there was commotion in the tank below.

The terrified game, alarmed by the unwonted sounds, came bounding out of the waters of the lake, the lighter-footed first, and the heavier animals lumbering in the rear. Then began a fusillade from both sides of the hills which was terrible. The crowd in the hopo of the day before was something akin to it, but no more. The three elephants and the two rhinoceroses lying in the path could not turn the agile antelopes, which bounded lightly over them, but only to add other bodies to the slain. At every crack of a rifle some animal dropped, either dead or wounded, upon the hard pathway.

This terrible baptism of fire and lead met and turned back the herds of frightened creatures, and they stood huddled together, uttering the various sounds of terror of which they were capable, until the natives, stealing along in the water, assailed them upon both flanks and in the rear with a shower of assegais, at the same time uttering yells of the most appalling nature. This unlooked-for attack drove the poor creatures wild, and they charged up the pathway again, only to meet the leaden shower which had driven them back before. But, wild with terror now, even the heavy buffalo cleared the obstacles in their path, and were soon on the plain, leaving the pathway blocked with gory forms.

"Whoopie!" yelled Jim, bounding down into the path. "Didn't we just clean 'em out! Oh, great Caesar! Shoot him, somebody!"

For there rose from among the dead and dying the form of a huge buffalo, which, with tail waving and horns lowered, plunged straight at the unlucky Jim. It was of no use to try running up the slope, for the animal would be upon him in two bounds, and, speaking literally, he was obliged to take the bull by the horns. And what horns they were, and what power dwelt in the huge neck of the bull he soon found out, for with a sudden jerk, which nearly dragged his arms out of the socket, Jim was sent flying over the back of the beast! He alighted upon the dead elephant and rolled down upon the other side, striking upon the first rhinoceros,

which lay with its head half-buried under the body of the elephant. At the same moment two or three shots sounded, and the bull fell dead. Just then Jim, with a face as white as chalk, came flying up the hill.

"Oh, blame my cats, boys, if this old black rhinoceros ain't as lively as a cricket! Let's take him alive!"

And the whole party sprung down into the roadway, but kept back until Mudara had obtained and lighted a bunch of his narcotic weed, and with this in his hand approached the prostrate rhinoceros and applied it to his nostrils.

CHAPTER X.

LASSOING ZEBRAS—TOO BIG A CONTRACT—LION VS. BUFFALO.

THE head of the rhinoceros lay, as has been said, under the body of the elephant, in such a way that the ugly snout showed under the belly of the giant, and they could see that while the black was as lively as a cricket, the weight of the elephant, combined with the fact that the long horn had not been withdrawn, rendered it impossible for him to withdraw his head. As he saw his enemies approaching he gave a vicious snort, and his wild eyes fairly blazed, but in spite of all his struggles he remained pinned fast to the ground, from which he vainly endeavored to raise himself. As the noxious plant, emitting its drowsy volume of smoke, was applied to his nostrils, he made a violent struggle, but the elephant was too heavy, and with a gasping sigh he gave up. There was a convulsive movement of his legs, and then he lay quiet and they set about making him secure. Knowing, as they did, the gigantic power of the creature, they took great pains with his bonds, and then, by the aid of levers, succeeded in raising the body of the elephant so as to withdraw the horn. Before nightfall the rhinoceros was in one of the cage-wagons and on his way to the village, perfectly furious, but at the same time quite unable to take revenge.

It was idle to ask any work from the natives after such a successful hunt. They could not understand why men should weary themselves with hunting when meat was so plenty; and the hunters saw, to their disgust, the whole tribe sit down to feast upon the carcasses.

"See here, Mudara," said Jim; "let's have some fun. I say, Ernie, I wish you had a lasso, and you could get me a zebra, too."

"Couldn't you 'crease' one?" asked Ernie.

"Arthur could; he shoots close enough for that, but I would be likely to shoot him through the neck. No; I'd rather try the lasso."

"I've thought of it myself, I can tell you," said Ernie. "And to prove it—look here."

And he dragged out a beautiful rawhide lasso, evidently just made.

"Hurrah for you! Come on, Mudara; let's have a hunt all by ourselves."

"Take care of your skins, boys!" warned Arthur, laughing. "I ought to go with you, but Danato and I have business in another direction. You'd better take ten or twelve Kroos, anyhow."

They started out, Ernie riding his zebra, which he had fitted with a pad-saddle upon which he had managed to set a strong piece of

ivory as a pommel. The zebra went wonderfully well, and showed no disposition to fight against his young master. They marched rapidly, and at the end of two hours, passing through a jungle, they stood upon the edge of a broad plain, looking almost like one of our western prairies, and upon this countless animals were feeding. And, three or four miles away, upon a sunny slope, they saw a herd of zebras feeding. While they stood consulting as to the best means of reaching them, they saw the leader of the herd throw up his head, and a moment later, the whole band came down at a broad, stretching gallop, directly toward the place where the party stood.

"Back into the jungle!" cried Ernie, tugging hard at his bridle. "Hope I may never see the back of my neck if they are not coming here. We've got the wind in our favor, too. Lay low and keep your eyes ready!"

As he spoke the herd drew nearer and nearer, the wind coming with them, so it was impossible that they should scent their enemies. Ernie looped his lasso and made ready. Nearer and nearer they came, and Jim raised his rifle, determined to try to "crease" one of the zebras, whether he failed or not. Scarcely forty yards separated the herd from the jungle when Ernie rode out with his lasso whirling in the air. The herd wheeled with military precision, but Ernie had already picked out a victim, and the lasso went whirling through the air in a graceful sweep and settled over the head of a beautiful zebra.

Ernie, who had taken mustangs upon the plains, wheeled instantly the moment he saw the loop settle over the head of the game, and urged his own steed off at right angles. The effect of this was to throw the zebra with a force which for a moment completely stunned him. Jim fired at the same moment, and one of the zebras fell forward on his knees and then rolled over on his side; whereupon Jim darted up, rifle in hand, and saw that his work had been well done: the crease across the neck, while not deep, was enough to take the power out of the animal for the time being. They had come provided, and in a moment both zebras had been strapped a *la Rarey*, and the two boys commenced operations.

Ernie insisted that Jim himself must have the training of the animal he was to ride; so Jim chose the one which had been thrown by the lasso. They spent three hours in the work and at the end of that time both zebras would allow themselves to be mounted, and that of Jim could be cowed in a moment simply by laying the lasso upon his neck.

"That job is done!" decided Ernie, as he sat easily in his saddle, leading one animal by means of his lariat. "Hey! Look yonder, Jim; there's fun!"

About a mile distant a buffalo cow and calf were feeding, and upon this calf a lion, prowling in search of food, had set his heart for a portion of his noonday meal; and as they gaz'd the lion was seen running from bush to bush, his eyes upon the calf, who was feeding unconsciously by the side of its mother. All at once the calf caught sight of the great tawny body crouching in the shadow of a bush, and ran to

its mother, bleating in fear. They expected that the buffalo cow would set off at a run, but, to their surprise, she did nothing of the kind, but looked at the bush with an angry stamp of the foot, and a shaking of the head which evidently meant business.

"Judas Iscariot!" cried Jim; "if she don't mean to fight it out!"

"Two to one on the buffalo if she does!" said Ernie.

"Oh, pshaw; that's all nonsense! Everybody knows that the lion is the king of beasts."

"So called, but I'll back a Rocky Mountain grizzly to eat up the best lion that ever cracked bones, in six minutes by the watch. And this buffalo cow is fighting for her young, and that makes all the difference in the world. The circus is opened, and the show is free."

The lion, who seemed to be a trifle disconcerted by the pugnacious attitude of the buffalo, finally seemed to make up his mind not to wait longer for his dinner, for they saw him dart out from behind the bush and make a rush at the calf, which sunk to the earth overcome by terror. But the mother, with her tail as straight as a pike-staff, and with a sonorous bellow, plunged forward to meet the lion, and catching him as he reached the earth "raised" him with tremendous force. The next moment the huge body was flying through the air like a stone hurled from a catapult, alighting in a *wait-a-bit* bush with a force which drew a shriek of rage and pain from him. As he scrambled out he made a swift sidelong rush, with the purpose of getting past his enemy and attacking upon the other side, but the cow came racing down, eyes all aflame and tail waving, and cut him off from his prey again.

"Hurrah!" cried Jim. "Good for the old cow! Never say die while there is a shot in the locker, old lady!"

The lion, now wild with rage, made a leap at the head of the buffalo, but she, nothing loth, met his rush firmly and inserting her horns under his body as before, sent him flying through the air. As the lion crawled out his tail dropped, and instead of making another attack he ran for his life, pursued by the angry buffalo with hoarse bellowings of rage and triumph.

"Blow, bugle, blow!" cried Jim, dancing wildly. "Don't fire a shot, if you love me, but let the old girl chase him out of the kingdom."

The lion, seeing himself so closely pursued and evidently frightened out of his wits, now headed directly for the jungle in which the hunters stood. Not liking this, Jim ran out and gave him a shot, which had the effect of turning him, and in a moment he was overtaken by the buffalo and subjected to another toss.

He was no longer hungry; all he wanted was to be let alone, and when at last he bounded into a dry crevasse and disappeared among the thorns, he was one of the most thoroughly whipped beasts in Africa.

The zebras had stood their ground well during the shooting, and now moved along at a good pace toward the camp. Looking over his shoulder, Ernie soon saw a great herd of zebra, perhaps a hundred in all, tearing down upon them at their best speed. The beasts were evidently bent on overtaking them.

"Go hard, Jim!" exclaimed Mudara. "Get to camp; we all right!"

"Go, Selim!" shouted Ernie, bending forward on the neck of his striped horse, and heading for the conical hill near the base of which their camp was pitched. The tamed beasts seemed to fear their former companions quite as much as the boys did, and responded nobly, the led animal keeping well up and going with tremendous speed. Behind them raced the wild zebras, their sides shining in the rays of the sun, and doggedly bent upon overtaking and destroying the creatures who had robbed them of their companions. Many a wild race had Ernie Castleton rode, many a hard match; but, since the day when he first crossed a steed he had seen nothing to equal this or had as much cause to ride hard. The thud of the flying hoofs sounded ominously in their ears, and they knew that the herd was gaining foot by foot. But before them lay the lake, and two or three miles away the white-topped wagons gleamed before their eyes.

"I say, Ernie," gasped Jim, "I'm about done."

"Give up your zebra and run into the bushes."

"Never!"

"Then here they come. Prick him with your knife; make him go."

But nearer and nearer thundered the swift hoofs; the head of the flying herd was barely ten feet behind them, when there came the sharp discharge of rifles and the whizz of flying spears; the herd reeled and took to flight; while Arthur and Paul, attended by Danatoo and half a dozen of his men, came rushing from the jungle, just in time.

CHAPTER. XI.

JIM'S REVENGE—THE AARD VARK—PAUL AND THE LION—A LOST SPECIMEN.

Jim was a boy who could "stand grief," as the saying is, but it annoyed him not a little that Paul De Lacy should make so much sport at his expense, on account of the zebra chase, and he looked about for ways and means of getting even with his French friend. In a country like Africa, where they were continually in danger, it is not a matter of surprise that an opportunity should soon occur.

"Aha, *mon enfant*!" laughed Paul, as he patted the boy on the shoulder, "you ride *ver* well, by gar! But ze zebra run like ze devil; *ver* fast!"

"I guess I know it, don't I?" grumbled the boy. "I ought to, if any one does. But see here, Paul; seeing you've got so much to say, I'd like to see *you* on a zebra."

"I can ride heem," replied Paul.

"I don't know whether you can or not," replied Jim. "In my opinion a Frenchman can't ride anything very well. You might stick on a horse—but a zebra! Oh, no!"

"My young friend," cried Paul, "I will ride anything. I belonged to ze hussars, and can ride like a centaur."

"Well, I'll give you a chance. We are going out after wildbeestes to-day, and I say you can't ride my zebra. If you will try it, I will trade with you. But you won't. I know; you ain't game to do it."

"Bring on ze striped quadruped and you s'all

see. *Mille diables!* Vat you talk about, Jims! I show you how to ride. I say so, by gar; out."

Jim, having worked his victim up to the point required, felt more at ease, and the party prepared to start, and Jim brought out his zebra, placed the bridle in Paul's hand, and vaulted into the Frenchman's saddle. Paul did not hesitate for a moment, but leaped at once upon the back of the zebra, which stood like a lamb for a moment, and then "bucked," leaping three feet into the air, and coming down with stiff legs, shooting Paul forward on the green sward with great force. The Frenchman sprang to his feet, half frantic with rage, and made a furious dash at the zebra, and again sprang into the saddle, but the animal arched his back and shot the Frenchman out again, and, as Paul leaped up once more, the zebra charged at him with open mouth, squealing savagely, and Paul, who was as brave as a man need be, ran for his life, the zebra in close pursuit. It is impossible to say what might have happened had not Jim uttered a peculiar signal whistle, and the zebra came back with drooping crest, and rubbed his nose against the hand of his master.

"I reckon we may as well change," declared Jim, with a grin. "'Tain't every one can ride a zebra, old fellow."

"*Sacre*, no!" replied Paul. "I s'all laugh at you no more, *bon garcon*. But one day I s'all get vat you call even wiz you on account of zis trick."

Jim laughed as he changed beasts with the Frenchman, and they rode away together, Paul praying in his inmost heart that the zebra would run away with Jim again. But nothing of the kind happened, and they were quickly on the plain where they expected to find the wild-beestes. As they rode on Danatoo stopped and looked curiously at a large ant-hill which they were passing. The population of the hill were in great confusion, darting in and out, and the hill shook as if some great commotion was going on below.

"Want ant-eater, cappen?" inquired Danatoo. "He good eat."

"Don't kill the creature," cried Arthur Castleton, as he sprang from the saddle. "I want to take him alive."

Danatoo ran to the hill, and after a furious struggle, succeeded in drawing out one of the largest specimens of the *aard vark* which Arthur had ever seen. He determined to keep the curious creature, if possible, and after it had been bound, he consigned it to the care of two of the natives, with orders to transport it to the camp, while the rest of the party continued on their hunt. The *aard vark*, or African ant-eater, is indeed a curious creature, and Arthur was glad to add it to his collection. The animal had burrowed under the hill, and was engaged in depopulating the colony of ants when he was captured. Paul was enraptured, and went into ecstasies over the captive, and fearing that the bearers, who were casting hungry glances at the ant-eater, which they regard as a capital dish, might kill it, he determined to stay with them, and see that it was safely transported to the camp.

The idea was innocent enough in itself, and no doubt would have resulted well but for an unfortunate circumstance, against which Paul could not well guard, not having the gift of second sight. The rest of the party rode on, and Paul, after studying the peculiar animal before him for some time, ordered the men to proceed, while he rode slowly behind them. The four made a sort of litter, in which they placed the *aard vark*, laid it on their shoulders, and advanced at the trot peculiar to these strange men, and all was going well, when Paul saw the bearers cast their burden to the four winds of heaven, and dive into the jungle with the cry which had before sounded in his ears:

"Tao, tao!"

"Ah, misérables!" shrieked the Frenchman, bounding like a ball in his saddle. "Cowards, scelerats, negroes vile! Vy you run and expose the *aard vark*? Oh, *grand ciel*, how zey run!"

The natives had not stood upon the order of their going, and were already buried in the jungle, when a powerful black-maned lion crossed the plain with tremendous bounds, directly toward the Frenchman.

There was nothing on earth for which the naturalist would fight so bravely as for a specimen, and he knew that if he turned his back the *aard vark* would surely be devoured by the lion, and his rage was terrible. Bringing his rifle to a level, he fired at the lion while yet upon the bound, and with so sure an aim that had not his horse swerved he would have planted a bullet in his heart. As it was, the ball passed through the upper part of the back, narrowly missing the spine, and inflicting a painful wound, which stopped the creature in his spring.

"Come out, poltroons, villains," screamed Paul. "Vare are your javelins now?"

The flying negroes, who had seen the result of the shot, came hurrying out with shields and javelins, and advanced in considerable trepidation to the spot where they had thrown down the *aard vark*. As they did so they saw the lion drawing himself along the ground, showing his teeth in a vicious way, and evidently still ready for battle. With startling unanimity they hurled their javelins on a useless errand, while the lion was at least fifty yards away, and again took to flight, while the gallant beast, making a great leap, which showed that he had plenty of life in him, reached the side of the *aard vark*, plainly intending to make a meal on it. Paul sprang from the saddle, as his aim had been baffled by the motions of the horse in his first shot, and throwing the bridle over his left arm, so that the animal could not run away, he took steady aim at the lion, which was already drawing the helpless *aard vark* toward him with his powerful paw.

But luck was against Paul for the horse was terrified at the immediate presence of the lion, and pulled his master's arm just at the wrong moment, and his bullet flew over the head of the king of beasts, and with a roar which made the jungle tremble, the lion bounded toward him. Paul would have mounted, but the terrified horse ran back to the length of the bridle and pulled so hard that Paul could not

get to him, and a torrent of French invectives burst from him, even in the face of danger.

"Ah, pig-head brute, hog of a horse, vait. *Prenez garde*, you fool, you; *sacre*, let me mount. I am devour by ze man-eater. He swallow me at one gulp, by gar. W'o, zen, fool!"

He looked over his shoulder, and saw that the lion was close upon him, and wheeling, drew his heavy navy revolver and opened a fusilade which took the animal completely by surprise and for the moment cowed him, and he crouched upon the earth at twenty paces distant, the red eyes glaring, and the tail lashing the tawny sides with repeated strokes. Paul had three shots left, and held them, for he did not care to waste them if it could be avoided, and passing the bridle of the struggling horse over his arm again, he prepared to fill the vacant chambers, when something in the eye of the lion warned him that the creature was about to spring, and he let go the bridle; and, drawing a bowie with his left hand, braced himself for the struggle which he knew must come, and planted a bullet directly between the eyes of the lion and waited for his spring, when one of the negroes, gathering courage, crawled up near enough to drive a javelin through the body of his dreaded enemy from side to side. It pierced his heart, and the lion rolled over, kicking in the last agony. At the same moment, while Paul was yet triumphant, the other negroes shouted, and with deep rage in his heart Paul saw another lion bounding toward the jungle, dragging after him the body of the aardvark. It had been a useless struggle, for the prize of battle was lost.

CHAPTER XII.

LION AND ELEPHANT—TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT BATTLE WITH A "ROGUE."

PAUL DE LACY, when his temper was roused, was, like all Frenchmen, exceedingly excitable, and letting his horse run, he bounded across the plain on foot, in chase of the lion, which, incumbered by the aardvark, could not make very rapid progress. As he ran the Frenchman pressed new cartridges into the empty chambers of his revolver, without stopping for a moment in the pursuit. Paul was game to the core, and at that moment he would not have hesitated to tackle a family of lions with his bare hands. He shouted at the flying lion at the top of his voice, hoping that the savage beast would drop his prey and turn on him. But for some reason, the animal seemed more bent on escaping with his prey than on fighting, and continued his course across the plain, while close behind him bounded the irate Frenchman, brandishing his arms and screaming at the top of his voice. The amount of vituperation and abuse which he heaped upon the flying lion was simply astounding, but the animal did not seem impressed by it, and continued his flight, and was about to plunge into the jungle, when the bushes parted, and a large elephant, which had been hiding in the

cover of the bushes, came charging out upon him.

It was a "rogue," which is the same in Africa as in Ceylon, a villainous misanthrope, who likes nothing better than to roam the forest alone and to attack any unfortunate creature who happens to pass, whether human or otherwise. The rogue is always "spoiling for a fight," always glad of a chance to have a row. In the present instance he trotted out, his tail swaying gayly, his trunk waving on high, and a shrill trumpet call ringing on the clear air as he came down upon the lion.

"Aha!" shouted Paul. "Pardieu, Monsieur Lion, how you like zis? Eet is splendid, magnifique! Oh, ze fine rogue; ze elegant elephant. By gar—go for heem as my young friend Jims would say. Ascend him, ozzairwise, climb heem, Monsieur leElephant, *sacre-r-r-r-r-r—ee!*"

The sudden appearance of the rogue had taken the lion so completely by surprise that for a moment he stopped, apparently stupefied, glaring at the unwelcome intruder. It was only for a moment, however, for the lion does not often yield the right of way to any other creatures which roam the jungles, and dropping his prey he leaped straight at the front of the rogue. But this was an old stager, that was evident, for he tossed his trunk high in the air to escape from the claws and teeth of the lion, who struck against the broad breast of the elephant, clung there for a moment, and then dropped to the earth, and the rogue lifted his ponderous foot and planted it on the ribs of the prostrate creature, bearing down his weight sufficiently to hold him there without quite killing him, while a roar which was now changed to fear burst from the throat of the tortured beast. The small twinkling eyes of the rogue were bent upon the enemy sprawling under his broad foot, and had it been possible, it might have been said that the creature laughed at the downfall of his foe, and tantalized him before destroying him. Perhaps the death would not have come so soon, but, in bending his trunk toward the lion, the captive creature struck it with his claws, inflicting painful gashes. Instantly the ribs of the lion cracked under the weight of the elephant, and a last agonized howl burst from his throat. Then the huge rogue, trumpeting loudly, reared his giant body in the air, and came down repeatedly with both feet upon the prostrate form, crushing it out of all shape. Then, kneeling upon the body, he kneaded it into a pomace, accompanying the effort by wild trumpetings of rage.

Paul De Lacy had been an interested spectator, encouraging the elephant by shouting at the top of his voice, and dancing wildly on the green grass. He was certain of one thing—the elephant would not eat the *aardvark*, and

had certainly made it very unpleasant for the lion, and deprived him forever of the pleasure of making a meal on stolen meat. The idea of the Frenchman was that the elephant, after wreaking his vengeance on the lion, would go quietly away, when he would rescue the body of the ant-eater, and at least preserve it for mounting, even if it were dead.

But the elephant did not seem to tire of the sport, and was now engaged in tossing the body of the lion in the air, for the pleasure of pouncing on it when it fell, and Paul began to get tired of looking on. He looked back, and saw that one of the negroes had caught the horse, and was coming up at a gallop, carrying the rifle which Paul had dropped in the pursuit.

"You go away, you rogue elephant," shouted Paul, angrily. "Why you stay: aha! base villain, old brute, why you do zat?"

The elephant had pounded the lion so badly that the body did not lift easily, and he now turned his attention to the anteater, and the next moment it was flying through the air, hurled from the vigorous trunk to a height of twenty feet, and as it came down the huge creature pounced upon it, as he had done upon the body of the lion, and began to crush it.

If Paul was mad before, he was furious now. In vain he had fought with savage lions to save that beautiful specimen from destruction, for now, at the last moment, it was being beaten into fragments under the cushion like feet and knees of the elephant, and forgetting the danger, Paul was about to rush forward with only his revolver, when the native galloped up to his side.

To tear him from the saddle, to mount in his place, and thrust a shell into his rifle, was the work of a moment, and then, sitting like a statue, the Frenchman aimed at the center of the elephant's forehead and pulled the trigger. There was a loud crack, such as is heard when a rifle ball strikes an iron target, and the rogue came to his knees. But it was only for a moment, and springing up, he elevated his trunk and charged after Paul De Lacy with delightful eagerness, and the Frenchman set in his spurs and rode hard to escape, holding his saddle by the gripe of his knees even while putting in a new cartridge. It was a neck or nothing race for a few moments, the rogue, notwithstanding his size, running with surprising agility, his extended trunk within a yard of the horse's tail. But Paul had no desire for a nearer acquaintance, and, if the truth must be told, got all the speed possible out of his horse, and really felt better when he saw the distance gradually widening between himself and his pursuer. But, even as he rode, he was cursing the unhappy fate which was driving him away from his beloved "subject," the aard fark, and in his secret heart

hoped that Jim would not hear of this, for if he did, he was quite assured that the boy would take revenge for his laughter on account of the zebras. Enraged at the close pursuit of the elephant, he wheeled in his saddle and emptied his revolver in his face, one barrel after the other, and the huge animal stopped in considerable confusion, while Paul, after riding a hundred yards further, pulled in his panting horse and looked at the giant. To his rage, the creature gave a defiant trumpet note, turned in his tracks, and went back to the place where the aard fark lay, and the next moment it was flying into the air again, and a despairing cry broke from the lips of Paul De Lacy.

"Oh for a cannon, that I might exterminate that ruffian," he growled. "Why does he do it? Does not some secret dictate teach him that this is the best way to drive me mad? Aha, coward, fool, villain, come after me again."

But the rogue was deaf to all entreaties, and Paul attacked him again, only to be chased about the same distance. He knew perfectly well that the rifle he carried was not heavy enough for elephant-hunting, and it drove him mad to think that he could do nothing more than annoy the huge brute, which, after driving him away, turned back to the *aard fark*, and danced upon the prostrate body with redoubled zeal, until tears of rage actually ran down Paul's face, and the simple natives, thinking to please him, ran up and attacked the elephant with javelins—for they do not fear this huge beast so much as they do the lion. He bounded away in pursuit of them, when Paul darted in, grasped the *aard fark*, and threw it on his horse, and was off like the wind, closely pursued by the furious rogue, whom he now left far behind. But, when he looked at the shapeless form of the *aard fark*, he vowed to take up the trail of the rogue next day, and never leave it until the creature was dead. Having come to this determination, he rode away in search of his friends, the negroes running by his side.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LESSON FOR THE MAKOLO—NEW ALLIES—A BABY ELEPHANT—MADARA'S GOOD BLOW.

JIM CASTLETON had his laugh in good earnest when Paul overtook them, and amid the wildest exclamations, told his story of his awful wrongs on the part of savage beasts. The party had had good luck, and the natives were loaded down with game of all descriptions. They became wildly excited when told of the presence of the rogue, and a hunt was set down for the next day, when Paul promised himself revenge on the elephant for the wrong he had done him. He was somewhat soothed by the

promise of Danatoo to find another ant-eater for him before they left the country, and the party went at once to the camp, which they found in some confusion, and they were greeted by a villainous-looking negro, his hair dressed in such a way that it stood out from his forehead like the horn of a gnu, and his face hideously daubed with red and white clay. Naauna started as he beheld this apparition.

"What do you seek here?" demanded the young king, speaking in the Balake dialect, "you, the medicine-chief of the Makolo."

"A bird has passed through the air from the land of Sibaticane, and has sung to the Makolo that the great king is dead. I am the voice of my king, Sekula, and I ask if Mudara has dared to bring the White Wizards into our land?"

"Why not, medicine-man?" demanded Mudara. "It makes my heart strong when I think that the White Wizards are our friends. See. Sibaticane was brave and his people did him honor. In an evil hour he made the White Wizards his enemies, and behold, he is dead and Naauna is king. Beware of the wrath of the White Wizards, the lords of lions and men."

"I come here for tribute," replied the medicine-man, proudly. "No strangers can pass through the country of Sekula without purchasing the right."

Mudara repeated the words of the fellow to Arthur Castleton, who answered:

"Say this to him, Mudara: 'The White Wizards would be friends with all. Let the king come to us, and we will give him more meat than his tribe can kill in a year and a day, but we give nothing by force.' Ask him what he demands."

"My king says: 'There is game enough in the woods and plains for the Makolo, but there is not enough for the White Wizards, who come with fire-sticks that kill afar off. Let the White Wizards send us these fire-sticks, and we will make peace with them. If not, let them leave the country of the Makolo, for we will not have them among us.'"

"Then let the king come and take our arms," replied Arthur, proudly. "He shall find that not all the power of his tribe can beat the great Wizards of the North."

The medicine-man made a gesture of defiance and left the camp, followed by the taunting shouts of the men of Naauna, who, confident in the power of the White Wizards, did not fear the Makolo. But it was certain they were in for a fight, and they at once set to work and strengthened their camp, and made every preparation for battle. Scarcely two hours had passed when the sound of barbaric music was heard, and in a short time a great body of native warriors appeared upon the

plain, advancing at a quick pace, and in their midst, under a canopy of feathers, marched their king, a hideous-looking old man, to whom they paid the greatest respect. On seeing them the men of Naauna would have clashed their shields and shouted, but were restrained by order of Arthur.

"Go down to them and stop them where they are," said Arthur, turning to Naauna, "and say to them that to prove what we can do I will send a ball through the shoulder of the man who marches by the king's side."

"It's five hundred yards if it's an inch, Artie," whispered Jim.

"No matter. Go and tell them what I say, Naauna, and then keep out of range of that fellow beside the king."

Naauna bounded down the slope and was seen in conference with the old king, and a wild, derisive shout came up from below at the threat which the White Wizard sent. They did not believe it was possible to do them any injury at that distance, and their laughter was of the most clamorous description, and no man was more pleased than the threatened negro, who stepped boldly out in front of the rest and exposed his breast to the aim of the marksman. Arthur took his long range rifle, and lying on his back just outside the circle of wagons, the muzzle of his rifle resting on his foot, he drew a fine bead on the presumptuous negro. After settling his sights to suit himself, Arthur made sure of his aim and pulled.

The man spun half round, as if pulled by an invisible hand, clapped his hands wildly to his perforated shoulder, and fell in his tracks, with a perfect howl of rage and pain.

"The White Wizard is kind," shouted Naauna. "He might have killed Caloota, but he would not do it. Woe to you, if you make these great men your enemies."

The old king started from under his canopy and looked at the wound in the shoulder of the fallen man, and then stooping, he put dust on his own head, and gave an order to his men. They at once laid down their weapons, and the king, with two of his principal men, advanced alone to meet Arthur. A more abject specimen of humanity could not be conceived than this negro king, who, as he approached, threw himself upon the earth three times, and sprinkled dust upon his head. Arthur stepped forward, raised him from the earth, and told Naauna to speak to him and tell him that the Lion Lords would be friends to him if he was faithful.

"He fool," averred Mudara, in English, laughing heartily. "No 'fraid of him any more; he lick dust under your feet from this hour."

In a few well-chosen words Naauna explained to the Makolo that the whites desired

to be friends with them, and would not kill them as long as they did no wrong. A few presents of colored cloth, beads and cheap ornaments, divided among the chiefs, completed the conquest of the Makolo, the king presenting a truly comical appearance as he strutted about in a short blouse with metal buttons, which was given to him by Arthur Castleton, under which his thin bare legs were plainly visible. It was as much as Jim could do to keep from laughing at the ludicrous make-up of the old king. The boy was somewhat disgusted by the ease with which the negroes had been cowed, as he rather hoped for a battle.

"That job is done," he said, "and now let us see what we can do with that rogue elephant. He beat Paul De Lacy as square as a die, and we must get even with him, or Paul will never get over it. These fellows will want a feed, too, and if we kill the elephant they can have a feast."

Mudara had only to hint to the Makolo that the great lords desired to hunt the elephant, and the whole army was at their disposal. In conversation with one of the hunters, Mudara ascertained that this particular "rogue" was well known and greatly feared, as he had killed two hunters during the last month; and, as he haunted a section of country where the best hunting grounds lay, they were much annoyed by his presence, and would bless any one who could dispose of him.

Captain Dick, Arthur, Paul, Jim and Ernie were of the party, Danatoo being left in charge of the camp, with the second mate of the Petrel. They took with them fifty of Naana's men and about one hundred of the Makolo, who stared in astonishment as they saw Ernie and Jim riding zebras, which they regarded as untamable. The negroes started on a run, and in spite of the speed of the animals, kept them at a good pace until they reached the plain where Paul had encountered the "rogue," and the guides announced that the elephant would be found somewhere in the neighborhood. The beaters at once made the circuit of the jungle and began to beat the covers for the elephant, and although they did not succeed in starting him at first, they drove out a cow elephant, followed by a handsome baby about three feet high, which was wonderfully like his dam in miniature.

"Pass the word to those fellows not to kill the baby," cried Arthur to Mudara. "He must be taken alive."

"Kill old one, eh?" demanded Mudara.

"Yes, I want to see how you fellows hunt the elephant, and we will keep our powder for the rogue, when they drive him out."

As soon as the negroes understood that the cow elephant was their prey they rushed for-

ward with frantic shouts, cutting off the huge creature from the jungle, and sending a cloud of javelins and spears into her body. It was a touching sight to see the mother, in this hour of peril, cover the body of her young with her own, supposing of course that he was also the object of attack. The effort of guarding him, too, impeded her own motions, as she dared not charge her assailants, fearing that by so doing she would uncover her offspring. The baby seemed to understand the danger, too, and kept close to her side, while the deadly rain of spears and javelins continued. Wounded in a hundred places, she still kept crowding her way toward the jungle, marching obliquely, while two or three native hunters, armed with a sort of cutlass, maneuvered to get in the rear so as to hamstring her. She seemed to fear this, and made constant charges, but each time stopped short, as the movement for the moment uncovered her young. At last Mudara, making a sudden rush, gained the rear of the elephant, and struck her a heavy blow with a broad-bladed ax, just above the foot. At the moment when he struck the muscles were strained, and the leg seemed half divided by the terrible wound, and as the elephant strove to bear her weight upon it her hind quarters sunk down, and they knew that she was conquered.

As the blow was struck, there was a wild commotion in the jungle, and out dashed the rogue, in close pursuit of one of the beaters.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH OF THE ROGUE—THE BABY CAPTURED
—A MAKOLO FUNERAL—GIVING AWAY A FAMILY.

"Look out, look out!" cried Mudara. "Dar he loup; shoot him quick, cappen."

Captain Dick was well mounted and carried his heavy roer, which he would not give up, in spite of the laughter of Jim Castleton. As the rogue ran by him he presented a shining mark, and Captain Dick, springing from his horse, threw his bridle to his bearer, and laying his "cannon" across the saddle, took a careful aim at the side of the rogue's head, and fired. The bullet, well aimed, passed directly through the brain of the animal in the midst of his furious career. He stopped, shivered, and then sunk slowly down, and lay in a palpitating heap, within three paces of the native of whom he was in chase.

"That's my cannon, Jim, you young lubber," said the captain, quietly, as he proceeded to reload. "What do you think of it now?"

"I think it spoiled all the fun, Captain Dick," replied the boy, who had already raised his rifle for a shot. Small blame to it if it killed a mammoth, but you don't call it sport, do you? I don't, anyhow."

"It was a splendid shot," declared Arthur, hurrying up. "Here, Jim; go and finish that cow elephant. Those fellows only torture her without doing any particular harm."

Jim sprung from his saddle and ran up in the midst of the natives, who were showering weapons into the body of the elephant, until she fairly bristled with them. She had gained the edge of the jungle, and stood with her body pressed against a large tree, trumpeting loudly, and no longer able to charge. Jim hurried up, and, as he came near, the elephant lifted her trunk to strike at him—just what the boy wanted. He raised his weapon and sent a ball crashing through her brain, and the elephant reeled and fell slowly to the earth, amid the triumphant shouts of the natives, who danced wildly about the prostrate forms, and praised the "great lords" who could thus slay, at a single blow, this giant game. They at once set to work to cut up the elephants.

"Save elephant's feet," said Mudara. "Make feast for you. Roast them in coals; they very good."

The hunters had not yet tasted this particular treat, and the natives willingly chopped off the great feet, and eight bearers took charge of them to carry them to the camp. Mudara now called for the lassoes, and the work of securing the baby elephant was commenced, while two runners were started off to bring a wagon to receive the young giant. Jim and Ernie, swinging their lassoes, succeeded in insnaring the young elephant, who fought like a hero, and it required the utmost efforts of as many men as could seize him at once to secure him. By this time the elephants were cut up, and after the tusks had been removed, fires were lighted, for the natives never neglect an opportunity to eat, and they at once set to work roasting pieces of the elephant flesh, gnawing off the outer portion as soon as it was heated through, and putting it back on the fire again. As each man kept two pieces roasting at the same time, in the course of an hour they had succeeded in gorging themselves to such an extent that they were hardly capable of motion. Only Naana and Mudara, who had taken up some of the ideas of their white masters, did not feast with the rest, but ate sparingly, and waited until the meat was well cooked before they took it from the fire. When all were satisfied, the balance of the meat was packed upon litters made of stout poles, cut in the jungle, for the purpose of conveying it to camp. By this time the wagon drove up, the young elephant was packed aboard, and the party, quite satisfied with the result of their hunt, prepared to return, the Makolo, swelled with pride and elephant meat, eager to do anything in the service of their white masters. When they were ready to de-

part, it was noted that one of the beaters was missing, and search was commenced for him in the jungle. The party who followed back the track of the rogue elephant found the man lying dead under a tree, his body crushed to a shapeless mass under the heavy feet of the elephant. The joy of the Makolo was at once turned to mourning, and the body of the slain man was laid upon one of the litters, and, borne by some of his friends, carried back to camp.

Scarcely had they reached it, and the Makolo understood that a warrior had fallen, when the preparations for a funeral commenced. The numbers of the Makolo had greatly increased, for the old men and large numbers of women had joined the party, since they understood that they would be kindly received by the whites. At once a long, tremulous wail arose as the body of the slain bearer was brought into the camp and laid upon a sort of raised platform in the center. He had been quite a noted warrior, and the mournful cries announced the estimation in which he was held by the Makolo. Any one who has seen an old-fashioned Irish wake will have some idea of the manner in which the funeral rites were conducted. It was part of their custom to eat and drink largely during the progress of the funeral rites, and at the same time keeping up a fearful howling, accompanied by the beating of drums and the clash of cymbals. They took it as a great kindness when the men of Naana and Mudara joined them with their guns, and combined with them in making night hideous. The orgies, for such they might be called, were continued all through the night, and it was not until nearly midday that the body was laid in the grave which had been prepared for it. The moment this was done the old king appeared before Arthur Castleton, leading a hideous old woman, followed by a younger female and seven children, ranging from an infant to a boy about fourteen years of age.

"See," exclaimed the king, "the mother, the wife and children of Bartula, who died in your service. I have seen with sadness that the great White Wizard has no mother, no wife, and no children. This is not just, and I give them to you. Guard them well, as Bartula did while he was yet alive, and see that they have plenty of meat."

Captain Dick burst into a jolly roar of laughter.

"Splendid, Arthur; the old fellow means to do you a kindness, in furnishing you with a family. I don't see how you are going to get out of it."

"Tell him to take them away!" cried Arthur, in considerable disgust. "What does the old fool mean by bringing them here?"

"He wants to give them to you, of course. Be a man now, Arthur, and provide for your family," laughed the captain.

"I'll provide for them," roared Arthur, "but let him take them away. Tell him anything you like; tell him I'm married and have got a family of my own to provide for. Give them anything in reason, and send them off."

By considerable effort Arthur succeeded in convincing the king that his gift was not appreciated, and the family were sent back so loaded with presents that they at once became very distinguished people in the eyes of the Makolo, and the marriage of the widow of Bartula quickly followed her acquisition of wealth, and the boy, as the owner of a gun and ammunition, at once took his place with the warriors; but the king never fully understood why Arthur Castleton refused his generous gift.

Everything had gone well with the hunters to this time, and had they succeeded in nothing else, they might have been satisfied. The hippopotamus, the rhinoceros and the gorillas in themselves ought to have been enough for any hunters, but they were not happy, for as yet they had not succeeded in securing what they had long sought, a family of young lions, and Paul and Arthur were somewhat depressed. But they registered a vow not to leave the country until a pair of young lions had been added to their present captives. Would they be able to keep this vow?

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAKOLO REVOLT—FLOGGED OUT OF CAMP—AMONG THE ALLIGATORS.

As the Makolo showed a disposition to keep with them, and as Arthur had no desire to feed a whole tribe, he called upon the king to send them home, saying that he would be glad of the company of a part of the warriors, but would not be troubled with so many. A hundred men were selected by the king and the rest sent home, and the next day they broke camp, determined to stop no more until they had searched the lion country, and not to hunt except when it was necessary for the wants of the camp.

They soon found that they had not gained much by adding the Makolo warriors to their numbers. They were terrible feeders, and having formed a high opinion of the prowess of the white men as hunters, displayed a disposition to allow them to kill game for them to eat, and Arthur at once protested against this laziness.

"We don't propose to employ ourselves in hunting for the benefit of a lot of lazy scoundrels, and the sooner you understand that the better, king," declared Arthur.

"The White Wizards no longer love the Makolo, then," whined the king, who had not en-

joyed such a superabundance of provisions for a long time.

"We don't love them well enough to work while they eat," was the reply. "Now I want you to understand me; in future whatever food they get they must kill for themselves, for we won't undertake to provide for them."

The king looked blank, for he had fully determined to remain with his white friends while they stayed in the country, and feed his warriors at their expense. It was extremely annoying, therefore, to find that they did not take kindly to the idea, and his lazy warriors, when they realized that they must work if they had anything to eat, became a source of great annoyance, for they went about with sullen faces, loudly proclaiming their hunger, and declaring that the White Wizards had killed all the game, and there was nothing left for them to eat. Finding that this had no effect, they began to threaten, and declared that the hunters would not be allowed to proceed unless they promised to feed them as before.

"I'll take charge of this gang, Arthur," exclaimed Captain Dick. "Where's them whips?"

One of the Petrel's men brought out ten good rawhides, which were distributed among the whites. The angry Makolo warriors were gathered about the wagons, loudly insisting that the young elephant should be given them to feast on, and Paul De Lacy, his teeth shut hard, and his breath coming in hissing gasps through his parted lips, stood before the cage with his rifle, ready to defend their prizes to the last gasp, when the Petrel's men suddenly burst in on the amazed negroes, and began to lash them with hearty good will. The long whips whistled through the air and alighted on the backs of the mutineers with all the power of the muscular arms which wielded them, and Naauna's men, catching the infection, tore down branches of trees and joined the sailors in their work.

"I'll put some life into your bones, you son of a gun!" yelled the captain, as he lashed away at a gigantic warrior who happened to be in his path. "I'll teach you to trip the light fantastic, you black bully. Dance, you devil—dance!"

The negroes roared lustily for mercy, and at last, driven desperate by the infliction, ran for their lives, leaving only the king in camp.

"You'd better go with the rest, king," cried Arthur, "and say to your men that if they had harmed one of these creatures we have taken, I would not have rested while a stick remained standing in the Makolo villages."

"I will stay," replied the king, promptly, "and I will put such a fetish on the beasts that not one of the Makolo will dare to touch the wagons."

"Very well; you can stay, and if you will find ten of your men who are ready to take their share in the work, they can go with us. I won't have the others."

The king started out alone and soon came back with ten crestfallen looking warriors, whom he announced as ready to do their fair portion of the work, no matter what it might be, and as a certain number of men who knew the Makolo country were necessary, they were gladly received, and did good work from that time.

They reached the banks of a good-sized river, believed to be a part of the Congo, at an early hour that evening, and went into camp. It was a broad and beautiful stream, and as they arrived a single canoe was seen pulling off from the other shore. In this canoe were half a dozen natives, who were evidently in doubt whether they ought to land, until they were called ashore by the Makolo. They were really fine-looking fellows, and brought with them a quantity of honey, which they readily exchanged for trinkets which were lavishly bestowed upon them by the visitors. They shared the supper of the whites, and were about to return, when Naauna asked them about the lions, and was informed that they were very numerous in the mountains just ahead, and that two men of their tribe had been killed that week.

As soon as the natives departed, the negroes ran down to the river and plunged into the water for a bath, while the oxen, which were very thirsty, hurried down to drink. As the leader of the team which drew the hippopotamus bent down to the water, a long pointed head was thrust up, and the ox was seized by the muzzle and his head instantly dragged out of sight. The poor beast stamped and struggled, and Mudara, who was looking on, at once sprang into the water with his knife in his hand. At the same moment a number of dark objects, looking like black logs, which had been lying at various points along the bank, became suddenly imbued with life, and moved toward the water.

"Alligators!" cried Paul, as he grasped his rifle. "Come wiz me, camarades."

The boys seized their weapons and ran down to the shore, while the negroes in the water swam madly for the bank, splashing in the water to scare the alligators, which now appeared in immense numbers, apparently eager for blood. Mudara plunged under the water, his knife in his hand. A moment later the ox was released, and dashed away, while, with a wild bound, the alligator appeared upon the surface, which was crimsoned with his blood, and Mudara, by an active leap, eluded a blow of the powerful tail, which swept the air with a whistling sound. The next moment the alligator

sunk, and was seen no more. Jim was rushing incautiously upon one of the monsters on the shore, with his rifle ready, when Mudara shouted to him:

"Look out for his tail, white boy; take care. Now he's got it."

One of the men who had been in the river, in avoiding the rush of the alligator which was waddling at him with his huge jaws opened, put himself within reach of the long horny tail. It instantly struck him, and the man was dashed, stunned and senseless, to the earth. The alligator wheeled, and seizing the prostrate man by the leg, commenced to drag him toward the water. Ernie, rushing up with a revolver, fired three shots in succession, but they had no effect upon the impervious coat of the animal, and only made him drag his victim toward the water with greater speed. The man had recovered his senses, and was screaming for help at the top of his voice, when Ernie, catching up one of the spears which had been cast without effect, directed its point at the alligator's wicked-looking eye, and pressed it home with all his force. With a convulsive leap, which broke the shaft of the weapon, the giant saurian released his hold on the man's leg, and if Ernie had not dropped swiftly, he would have been swept down by a blow of the tail. Then, seizing the extended hand of the negro, Ernie dragged him quickly out of reach, and then ran back to the water's edge, just in time to see another man, who had stepped into the water, dragged out of sight by another of the creatures.

"Poor fellow, he's gone!" cried Jim.

"He alligator-hunter," replied Mudara.

"Watch him now. He all right."

There seemed to be a great commotion under the water, and it was quickly turned to a blood-red hue, and after a moment of suspense the woolly head of the alligator-hunter rose slowly to the surface, and he reached the shore in safety, holding his bloody javelin in his hand.

CHAPTER XVI.

BATTLE UNDER WATER—THE CRY OF THE JACKAL—ATTACKED BY LIONS AT NIGHT.

How had he managed to make his escape?

When he was dragged below the surface of the stream he had his javelin in his hand, and the saurian held him in such a position that his right hand was free, and grasping the great reptile by the fore-leg, he had plunged the javelin into her body under the leg, in the portions where the skin was not so thick, and he was released and rose to the surface, leaving his gigantic enemy dying on the river's bed.

By this time the alligators seemed to realize that this was a losing game, and one and all had disappeared, leaving the bank clear. The

the horror of the young hunters, the negroes prepared at once to feast upon the bodies of the slain alligators, three of which had been secured, and the natives were very much astonished that their white friends refused to join them in their repast. But Jim said, that, on the whole, he would prefer to dine off a rattlesnake, and the negroes might have it all to themselves, and the whites made a meal from springbok steaks, which suited them somewhat better.

"It don't strike me as a very good place to sleep, boys," declared Jim, after the meal. "Suppose they take it into their ugly heads to pay us a visit in the night?"

"We must set a strong guard and drive them back. We can't afford to lose any of our cattle, either by lions or alligators," replied Arthur.

"I'll watch all night for a shot at a lion," exclaimed Jim, as he drew his favorite rifle toward him and looked it over to see that it was in order. "Those fellows did say that the lions were plenty. I only hope they will try a whack at our cattle to-night. You see I haven't had much luck with lions, though I've had a pop at pretty much everything else. I'm on for night duty, then."

The party sat around the fire for a long time that evening, and several times it became necessary to make a rush at the alligators, which came crawling toward the camp hoping to catch them sleeping. They were driven back by the use of spears and javelins, and finally seemed to give it up, and nothing more was heard from them. Jim had crawled upon the top of the elephant's cage, where he was not only in safety, but had a commanding position for a shot, should an opportunity present itself. Mudara, who had taken a great fancy to the boy, was with him, and half a dozen javelins and a long spear lay upon the top of the cage beside him. The Lion Hunter fell asleep, leaving Jim to watch, when a shrill barking was heard far out on the plain, and Mudara started up eagerly.

"Hear jackal," he whispered. "Tao not far off now."

The shrill barking of the jackal continued, and in a few moments a number of these strange creatures, known popularly as the "lion's provider," appeared in sight over the crest of a neighboring slope. They looked at the cattle inclosed in the circle of wagons, and fled immediately, making the jungle ring with their cries. Scarcely had they done so when the tremendous roar of a lion sounded in the hills, and was answered by another, and Jim knew that the brave brute for which he had been waiting was close at hand. There is something peculiarly startling in the roar of the lion at night, and Jim owned afterward to a

certain tremor, as he felt that they might soon be engaged in a deadly struggle with the king of beasts.

"Look dar! look dar!" hissed the Kroo, below his breath. "Tao look over ant-hill."

About a hundred yards to the right a great ant-hill stood upon the plain, and peeping from behind this the huge head of a large male lion was plainly visible. He seemed to be intently watching the cattle in the inclosure, and trying to decide how he should make the attack upon them. At the same time a large lioness stalked boldly out of the neighboring jungle and stood looking at the corral, waiting for her mate to advance. He did not hesitate long, for the huge tawny body was drawn out from the shelter of the ant-hill, and crouching low, he began to run across the opening, dropping from time to time, and looking to see if the cattle were alarmed. African cattle seem to detect the presence of the lion long before he reaches them, for they showed the greatest fear, pressing against the inclosure of wagons, and making every effort to escape from the dangerous neighborhood. By this time the whole camp was on the alert, and many weapons were made ready, and Jim, fearing that the older hunters would get ahead of him, sent a ball into the shoulder of the male lion, which drew from him a roar of rage, and he came bounding on, closely followed by the lioness, and heading straight for the cage upon which the boy lay. He seemed to know that his enemies were hidden there, and as Jim pressed a cartridge into his breech-loader, the great beast leaped, and the next moment was clinging to the edge of the cage, his great claws showing on the top. Then Mudara sprang up, grasping his heaviest spear, and drove it with all the power of his muscular arm into the breast of the lion, burying the point to a depth of eighteen inches. No animal, no matter how strong, could live under such a wound, and with a last agonized throe, which snapped the strong spear, the animal fell to the ground dead. Even as he fell the body of the lioness was seen in the air, springing forward to avenge the death of her mate, and seeing a confused mass of natives, she leaped into the midst of them, striking one dead as she came down, and then, with a second bound, caught another by the thigh and brought him to the earth. A dozen javelins were instantly buried in her body, and the natives fled, the lioness leaving the fallen man in order to pursue them. In doing so she presented her tawny side to the aim of three rifles, and all seemed to crack at the same moment. Pierced by three mortal wounds, the brave beast still made a mighty effort to reach the slayers of her mate, when the captain, leveling his mighty roer, shot her through the brain,

and the struggle was over. Then the hunters again retired, and were not disturbed that night, and at early morning they tracked on until they entered the lion country, and made a camp in a sort of natural fortress on the crest of a hill overlooking a beautiful lake, and prepared for the crowning effort of the expedition, the capture of a family of lions, and, if possible, of a giraffe, which they had not yet been able to secure alive.

CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER GIRAFFE—TRAILING A LION—TAO AT HOME.

ARTHUR took the third zebra in hand and soon had him in such subjection that he was quite as obedient to him as the others to their masters. The negroes, who had not been able to tame one of these savage steeds, were utterly surprised at the success which had crowned the young masters' efforts, and expected at each moment to see them hurled from the saddle and trampled out of the semblance of humanity by the vicious beasts. But, nothing of the kind ever happened; the young fellows seemed quite at home upon the backs of their strange steeds.

The capture of the zebras had put an idea into the head of Ernie, and early one morning they set out to accomplish their design. Only Arthur, Ernie and Jim were of the party, with Danatoo and Mudara running by the side of the zebras as guides. Their way lay along the level shore of the lake for a distance of five miles, when the ground became more rolling, and they passed through a defile into a plain dotted with clumps of trees of a peculiar kind.

"The giraffe loves the mimosa," said Danatoo. "Let us be silent, and we shall see them."

They stood silent for a quarter of an hour, gazing across the beautiful plains. Animals of all kinds passed them by, but they had set their hearts upon one object and would look at nothing else. It was not long before their wishes were crowned with success, for they saw, moving grandly across the plain, a family of giraffe, four in number. Two were giants of the race, their heads towering twenty feet above the ground, and the other two mere babies, not more than ten feet high.

"I'd give more for the young ones than the old," said Arthur, eagerly. "They are more easily trained, you see."

"Steady, then!" advised Ernie. "They are making for that clump of mimosa, and will not be more than twenty yards away when we burst out upon them. Do not miss your cast, Jim. As for Arthur, I never could train him to use a lasso, if I lived a hundred years."

The giraffes came lumbering on at their peculiar, rocking gallop, and were soon among the mimosa, cropping the fragrant leaves and flowers. The boys settled themselves in the saddle, took a firm gripe upon the reins, and suddenly burst out upon the startled family, with lassoes swinging in the air. The creatures bounded suddenly erect, and turning on their heels were about to dash away when the long, curved loops came sailing through the air, directly at the younger members of the family. Ernie did not miss his game, and had the satisfaction of seeing the loop settle over the lofty head, when he wheeled away and plucked the young camelopard from his feet with considerable force. Danatoo and Mudara ran up, and before the young animal had recovered from the shock he was hopped firmly in such a way that he could move his feet in walking, but not in running.

Jim had not been so lucky, and when Ernie looked up after his lasso had been removed he saw Arthur and Jim riding hard on the tracks of the three giraffes, nearly up to them, and Jim was gathering in his lasso for another cast. With a wild whoop Ernie urged his zebra on, taking the segment of the circle which the game was unconsciously following in their flight. The zebra, as if understanding what was required of him, fairly seemed to fly over the ground. As he rode, Ernie saw Jim raise his arm, then the lasso flew through the air, directed, not at the small animal, whose lightness of foot had carried it to the front, but at one of the large ones. This time the boy was more successful; the loop settled fairly, and Jim urged his steed to the right. Ernie saw the stately head of the giraffe tower into the air, as he rose upon his hind legs, and then he came crashing down, just as the other two, maddened by the close pursuit, wheeled sharply away and came dashing down upon a course which would bring them very near to Ernie, who quickly covered himself behind some bushes. At the proper time, as the giraffes came thundering down, the lasso flew through the air, and one stately creature went gulping on alone, robbed of all his family by the cruel hand of man. Ernie lifted his horn and began to sound it with all his might, and not without effect, for a great party of negroes who had been following on their trail, were seen running across the plain. They took charge of the three captives and departed for the camp, dragging the giraffes with them, much against their will.

"Good fun, that," declared Ernie. "How do you like it, Arthur?"

"I'd like it better if I could use a lasso," answered Arthur. "You and Jim have the best of me there."

"Because you never will practice, you see."

Now, if we hadn't been able to use the lasso we never could have caught these zebras in the first place, nor run down the giraffes in the second."

"Dar loup de ole tao!" shouted one of the negroes, suddenly.

They looked up and saw a magnificent lion crossing the plain a quarter of a mile away. The zebras snorted and stamped their feet, and evidently did not like the appearance of the lord of the African plains.

"Oh, if we only had that fellow!" cried Arthur. "See here, Mudara, how are we going to get the lions alive?"

"I'd lasso one if I could get the zebra near him," avowed Ernie.

"But you can't do that," was the testy reply. "Now we've got everything we want except these lions, and we *must* have them, you know."

"If we could find the lions' home," explained Mudara, "we could get them."

"Do you think that fellow is going home now?"

"Yes; he's no longer hungry; he goes home."

"Then we will follow him," decided Arthur, springing from his saddle. "Danatoo, you shall be Jim's gun-bearer, and Mudara must follow me. We will track the lion to his home."

"Am I not going?" demanded Ernie.

"You shall be in at the death, Ernie. At present, see that the giraffes go back to camp safely, and take care of the zebras. Come on, Jim!"

Ernie nodded, and caught the bridles of the two zebras, while Arthur, with his rifle at a trail, started away on the track of the great black-maned lion, which was trotting across the plain, apparently unconscious of the fact that he was being followed. And, indeed, it would have been hard for him to detect two such accomplished trailers as those upon his track. Whenever he showed a disposition to look back they crouched out of sight, and continued the chase the moment he went on.

For an hour the strange chase continued over the broad plain and then the creature plunged into a deep defile in the hills, into which the pursuers followed without hesitation. Once in the defile he broke into a hollow roaring as if he felt himself at home, and the roar was quickly answered from within the pass by three or four voices, from the sonorous base of the lioness to the treble of the baby lion.

"By George!" hissed Arthur. "It is a family! Just what we want!"

"I don't reckon we want the family all on us at once," suggested Jim.

"No, but we must find out where their den is. Come on!"

They pushed forward cautiously, and soon a sort of purring sound, like that of cats who are

sleeping, was plainly audible to the hunters. They knew that this was the time for caution, and parting the bushes inch by inch, they looked down the slope, and saw a strange sight.

A great tree overturned by some mighty wind had left a hollow under the roots which was perhaps ten feet square, with an opening in front just the width of the cave. In this lay the lion family, coiled up asleep, the lioness, two cubs, a half-grown lion and the giant male. It was a beautiful sight for a naturalist, and one which would have driven Paul half wild. For a moment Arthur gazed upon the scene; then, touching Mudara on the arm, he retreated cautiously until out of ear-shot of the cave.

"I don't care for the old ones," he said, quietly; "but I'll risk my life to take the half-grown lion and the cubs. Back to camp, and bring Paul and Ernie, half a hundred black fellows, and the nets. We will wait for you here."

And Mudara departed on a run, while Arthur and Jim climbed low trees, and settling themselves comfortably in the branches, awaited the return of the Kroo.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN UNWELCOME NEIGHBOR—A CLOSE GRIP—SUCCESS—HOME AND FRIENDS.

JIM formed a sort of hammock between two swaying boughs and sat back in utter abandon, for, young as he was, the boy had formed the somewhat vicious habit of smoking, in season and out of season, and enjoying the same. Rocked by the wind, he swayed back and forth, when his eyes were attracted by two glistening points in the branches above him—points which glittered like sparks of fire.

What were these points?

Jim only needed a second glance to show him the graceful head and long shiny neck of an anaconda, which, twined about the upper part of the tree, was raising his head above the top from time to time, evidently for the purpose of looking down into the valley below, where the lions lay in their den. A snake forty feet in length, with a body somewhat thicker than a man's thigh, was something for which our young adventurer had no affection, especially as he seemed to be on the look-out for something to eat.

But it was not upon the boy that those eyes were bent at present; on the contrary, the snake seemed to be regarding something in the valley, probably the lions.

"I say, Artie," whispered Jim, "I don't like this bedfellow I've got. Do you see him?"

"I've been watching him for ten minutes," was the reply. "All I can say to you is, don't let him get you in his coil. Keep your bowie ready, and if he drops on you, cut him in two."

"He's a mighty ugly beast to look at,"

averted Jim, "and I don't propose to allow him to embrace me. Seems to be looking for the lions. Can't you shin higher up your tree, and see if they are stirring?"

Arthur began the ascent of his tree, and, when near the top, saw that he had a good view of the lions' home. The lioness was on her feet, looking about her in a suspicious way, as if she scented danger. Soon she came trotting out along the beaten trail which had been used by herself and her lord so often that it was worn quite smooth, and she was soon under the very tree in which Jim and his snake-ship had ensconced themselves. Jim made himself particularly small, wishing all the attention of the serpent to be bestowed upon the lioness. The serpent had drawn in his head, and it was now gliding slowly through the leaves, the scintillating eyes fixed upon the lioness, which, with an angry growl, was looking up into the tree where Arthur sat, his rifle on his knees, looking at her in a very provoking manner. Her attention was so entirely taken that she did not see the anaconda until the small pointed head came flashing down through the leaves, and three bands of the long creature were thrown about the great cat's body. Too late she realized her danger, and the roar she uttered was full of mortal dread. But this roar ceased, or rather changed into a hollow moan; then to a long drawn sigh, as the deadly folds grew closer and closer, and with eyes half-starting from her head she vainly endeavored to release herself. But those three iron rings drew closer and closer, pitiless in their force, and the blood burst from her mouth, nose, and ears, and she lay senseless and inert in the horrible death circles.

The serpent slowly withdrew his folds, one by one, stopping to give a parting squeeze to his enemy as he seemed to think some little remnant of life remained, when there came a tremendous roar, and the male lion launched himself with lightning swiftness upon the serpent. So sudden was his onset that the creature had not time to coil about him before the long claws were buried in his spine. Writhing himself free, the serpent flung his deadly coils about the lion, and a battle royal began.

Of course, after the specimen they had received, the boys looked to see the lion conquered as the other had been, but for some reason the struggle was more protracted, and at last they began to realize that the creature had been so injured by the paw of the lion as to have lost a great portion of his constricting powers. The lion exerted himself to such a degree that two or three times he seemed about to break away but as often the folds were drawn tighter, and the lion, gasping and panting, half yielded to the power of the

charmed circle. Then the muscular tenacity seemed to go out of the body of the creature, and the lion would regain the mastery. At last, by a furious effort, the shaggy-maned beast succeeded in breaking free, but the moment he did so the serpent rose into the tree out of his reach and the lion sunk down exhausted.

"Drawn battle," said Jim, "but as I don't want this fellow in a tree over my head I'm going to give him a shot and then shin out as fast as I can. Fix that lion, Artie!"

But just then the serpent, seeming to recover himself, darted his long folds out of the tree and seized the lion as before. And now the two rolled here and there in that awful embrace, but, as before, the folds had not sufficient power to utterly destroy the lion, although the pressure to which he was subjected was terrible. But, hearing the footsteps of the men, Arthur and Jim raised their rifles and sent their contents into the body of the lion, while, a moment later, Jim drew his bowie across the glittering back of the serpent, half-severing it by the blow.

It was enough. The creature had been badly hurt by the lion and as this wound was given the power utterly left her, while the lion, writhing himself free, crushed the head of the serpent in his ponderous jaws, and then fell dead upon the lifeless body of the mate he had so nobly avenged.

Arthur gave a low whistle and Mudara came up.

"There is only the young lion and the two cubs," he said. "Your men must take him with the nets."

"It shall be done, great lord," said Mudara. "You shall see that we know how to work."

The position of the cave having been ascertained, two men were sent around to the back to startle the young lion and drive him from his place of rest. No sooner was this done than he came rushing out, his eyes all aflame, and they saw that, though young, he had a dauntless spirit, just the creature they sought! Mudara rushed out into the opening, carrying upon his arm a large white ball, and making derisive gestures at the young lion, which gave a tremendous roar, and sprang straight at the figure of the negro. But, even while he was in the air, the white ball upon Mudara's arm was suddenly unrolled and a fleecy net wrapped the lion from head to foot. From all sides the natives rushed upon him, net after net was flung over him, and while he lay struggling under the meshes Danatoo advanced with a branch of the "Dooka," which he had found and lighted, and by the aid of this powerful narcotic even the great strength of the lion was forced to yield. Then the last of the cage

wagons which had followed them through all, was driven up, the stupefied beast was hurled in and the iron door clanged to.

The cubs were secured more easily, and to the delight of Arthur proved to be a male and female, already weaned, and which bade fair to make a noble couple. And so, with the prize so long sought, they went back to the village of Naauna, happy at last.

For some weeks a party of sailors, by the direction of Arthur, had been building a huge raft of light logs. The boys called it Noah's Ark, and when its cargo was aboard it had a good right to the name. All the cages which had been left in Naauna's village were wheeled on board, and made secure. The two young giraffes, which no cage would hold, were strapped in the middle of the raft. And, a few days later, the Ark sailed amid the mournful cries of the people of Balegonga, who had learned to love the White Wizards. Arthur, Jim and Ernie rode along the shore; twenty canoes went before the raft to pilot it; a great concourse of people trooped along the river's bank, and thus the successful lion-hunters, with the prizes they had won, headed toward the coast.

The Petrel had been prepared especially for such a cargo, and when the cages were let down into the hold and carefully secured and bolted into the compartments which had been

made for them it is no wonder that the adventurers were well satisfied with their success. But, when the schooner swung out from the landing, with Mudara on deck as pilot, and the faithful Danatoo by his side, there was weeping heard in Kuruman, and never did men go away more sincerely mourned. But they had made the people rich in the things they most prized, and the twin brothers were happy in the present to each of two good rifles, and powder enough to last them a lifetime.

"Shall we see you no more, great lords?" asked Mudara, mournfully, as he took the hand of Arthur outside the surf-line.

"I do not know. An idea has come into my head, and some day I may carry it out. I would traverse this dark continent from sea to sea if I had men who would stand by me."

"You have them here!" responded Mudara.

"Come and try us."

"There will come a time, I hope; but for the present, good-by."

Mudara dropped into his canoe amid the cheers of the Petrel's crew, the sails filled, and the schooner bore off on her course until the white speck against the sky faded away, and Danatoo and Mudara were rocking alone upon that peaceful sea, praying for the time when the "great lords" would come again across that pathless ocean. Time only will tell whether Arthur Castleton kept his word.

— ❦ — **BIG** — ❦ —

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